ENGLAND'S

Present, Great, and most Incumbent

DUTY:

VIZ.

To meet God in the Way OF HIS

Judgments.

BODLEIANA BIBLIOTHECA

By *Robert Perrot*, Minister of the Gospel.

Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battel? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me, Isa. 27. 4, 5.

Quem, nullæ munitiones nostræ, a perficiendo judicio aversuræ sunt, nos ipsi unica resipiscentia, amoliturí sumus. *Junius.*

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READER,

THOU haſt here, though plainly, yet faithfully and impartially held forth unto thee, thine and every ones (that tenders the Nations weal) Preſent, Great, and moſt Incumbent Duty. viz. To meet God in the way of his Judgments: *In which he hath often, and is ſtill coming forth; and in which, unleſs we ſpeedily meet him, who knows how far he may proceed,* His anger not being turn'd away, but his hand (*ſeveral ways*) ſtretched out ſtill? *The Lord hath made us not only Miniſters, but Watch-men,* Ezek. 3. 17, Son of man, I have made thee a Watch-man to the houſe of *Iſrael—And as ſuch we are to warn, and make people aware, what the great God is doing in the World; and to excite and ſtir them up to their duty, accordingly, we are to dictate, not only what is ſeaſonable at all times; but what more eſpecially at ſuch a juncture of time, which judging that which follows ſo to be at this time.* viz. To meet God in the way of his Judgments: *yea, ſo, as nothing can be more: hath occaſion'd this diſcourſe: and therefore as for Apologies for what is here made Publick, eſpecially by one ſo unfit for ſo great a work; let the too great*

ſeaſonableneſs, as well as uſefulneſs and concern thereof, ſerve at once for all. The publick weal not only warrants, but exacts the doing our utmoſt as to what eſpecially has more than an ordinary tendency thereunto. Here's no deſpiſing of Dominions, *no* ſpeaking evil of Dignities, *nor pleading for* Parties, *but only for what is every ones great duty and concern.* viz. *Our ſpeedy betaking our ſelves to that which may help to ſecure the whole, and yet ſave a ſinking Nation. It is ſaid of* Crœſus *his Son, that though he was dumb, yet ſeeing his Father about to be ſlain, the dumb child ſpake: And ſurely the ſerious conſideration of the deplorable eſtate that this Nation is at preſent in, both in regard of the many heinous and grievous ſins daily perpetrated in it, as alſo the heavy Judgments impendent over it; is enough to make even a dumb man ſpeak, if poſſibly he might dictate ought that might prevent its final ruin. And what can be dictated as more ſeaſonable, or ſoveraign, than what the Lord himſelf in ſuch a caſe dictates,* viz. To prepare to meet him?

And ſurely the many gray hairs that are here and there *at this day upon* England (*as ſometimes upon* Ephraim, *Hoſea* 7. 9.) *at home, and that Univerſal Deluge of Affliction which hath well nigh overwhelm the Church of God abroad; ſpeak it high time to awake out of ſleep, and now if ever,* to ſtir up our ſelves to take hold of God, *and humble our ſelves, and reform at a more than ordinary rate.* And in that day did the Lord God of Hoſts call to weeping and mourning, *&c. And what day was that?* Ver. 5, A day of trouble, and treading down, and perplexity, by the Lord God

God of Hoſts, in the Valley of Viſion, &c. *And where almoſt is it not ſo? And ſhould not this be ſomething to us at home? And therefore we may now ſay* of laughter, it is mad; and of ſenſual mirth what doth it? *And if ever, That of the Apoſtle* James *is now ſeaſonable*, Chap. 4. 9, 10, Be afflicted and mourn, &c. Wo (*ſays one*) to our jolly, hardned profeſſors, who have no brokenneſs for ſin, that threatens the deſtruction of the Land of their Nativity; and if ſuch be Penitents, (*ſays the ſame*) they are gaudy ones, fitter for the Stage and Tyring-room of Vanity, than the Houſe of Mourning. *I have read, that one of the wiſeſt Stateſmen of this Kingdom that ever was, had this Verſe written upon his Study door,*

Anglica gens eſt optima flens, & peſſima ridens.

The Engliſh Nation is beſt weeping, and worſt laughing. I am ſure we are never in more danger, than when moſt ſecure. And what Ocean of tears is ſufficient to bewail our ſins? It is notably; and no leſs truly obſerv'd by a worthy Writer a-late: *That* We in this Nation ingroſs, and ſet up a Monopoly of Vice, and have made this Land the Stews of the whole World, and the very drain and ſink of the ſins of former times; as if all Miſcreants were here met, as at a general Rendezvouz: And how (*ſays the ſame Author*) have the filthy ſtreams and channels of all Nations, diſgorg'd themſelves in this Common-ſhoar of Iniquity. We may here behold the old Worlds oppreſſion, the fulneſs of Bread, idleneſs and filthineſs of *Sodom*,

Englands Imminent Danger. p. 55.

dom, the pride of *Jeruſalem*, the drunkenneſs of *Holland*, the vanity of *France*, the uncleanneſs of *Spain*, the Iron-yoak of *Egypt*, the furnace of *Babylon*, &c. And we are building up the confuſed Babel of our ſins and guilt, to ſuch a prodigious height, that we ſeem to threaten Heaven it ſelf, and as if we meant to pull God himſelf off his Throne. How many know no other breeding but to ſin with impudence? nor bravery, but to brave it out againſt the great God, and charge upon their own ruine? So that former times brought forth but *Punies* to our *Anakins* in wickedneſs. And how do ſinners ſtrive for maſtery in ſin, as if there was an excellency therein? *Never was there a Nation more ſignaliz'd with Gods goodneſs, nor more prodigious in wickedneſs, fuller of ſtupendious ſins, and yet fuller of ſtupid impenitency; being deaf to the loudeſt cry of Gods ſoreſt judgments, and making no other uſe of them,* but to defeat their deſign. *And ſhall not the great God* viſit for theſe things, and his ſoul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this? Can ſuch ſins, and a Nations ſafety; ſuch impiety, and a Nations impunity, ſtand long together; *ſurely was it not that Gods* Mercy is great above the Heavens, *and his Patience Infinite as himſelf, we had long a-go been as* Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah; *but bowels of mercy have hitherto prevail'd againſt the pleas of Juſtice, as to an utter overthrow.* How ſhall I give thee up England? how ſhall I make thee as Admah? *&c. And let therefore theſe riches of the goodneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering of God, at length lead us to repentance and amendment.* Gather your ſelves together, O Nation not deſired, before the Decree

bring

bring forth: *our Repentance had need run, leſt Gods ſentence out-run it.* Currat pœnitentia ne præ currat ſententia.

I have ſtudied plainneſs, and given but an hint of what I might much more have inlarg'd; That this being ſo much the duty and concern of all, it might not exceed the capacity of any; and that neither the Price nor prolixity thereof, might diſcourage any from the procuring and reading thereof. We have many hot diſputes, and controverſies at this day among our ſelves. But it were well, we all now joyntly and unanimouſly ſet our ſelves to comprimiſe, and take up that controverſy which the great God hath with us, and to appeaſe that wrath, which by reaſon of our many, great and crying ſins, is ſo juſtly incens'd againſt us, and has a-freſh a-late broken out ſeveral ways among us; to put us upon which, is the main purport and deſign of the enſuing diſcourſe, to which that it may prove ſubſervent, ſhall be the prayer of him, who is, and remains

Studious and deſirous of thine

and the Nations weal.

R. Perrot.

An Advertiſement.

THere is extant by the ſame Author, a Larger Treatiſe, Intituled, *Englands ſole, and Sovereign way of being ſaved*, grounded upon Pſal. 80. 19, *Turn us again, O Lord God of Hoſts: cauſe thy face to ſhine, and we ſhall be ſaved.*

England's preſent, great, and moſt incumbent Duty, *viz.* To meet God in the way of his Judgments.

Amos IV. 12, 13.

Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael: and becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael.

For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkneſs, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth: the Lord, the God of Hoſts is his Name.

CHAP. I.

The general Scope, Coherence, Parts, and Explication of the Words.

THE Lord had inflicted ſeveral Judgments upon this People already, 1. He *had given them cleanneſs of teeth, and want of bread,* ver. 6. 2. *Withholden the rain from them,* ver. 7, 8. 3. *Smitten them with blaſting and mildew,* ver. 9. 4. *Sent among them the Peſtilence,* (as

he hath among us.) 5. *Slain their young men with the ſword, and taken away their horſes,* (as he hath done ours,) *ver.* 10. Yea, 6. He had *overthrown ſome of them, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; and they were as a fire-brand pluck't out of the burning,* ver. 11. And yet they, notwithſtanding all theſe Judgments, remaining ſtill incorrigible, and not *returning to the Lord*: The Lord thereupon reſolves, as here: *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael: and becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael,* &c.

In the words, we have 1*ſt*, The Lords Minatory Reſolution; *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael.*

2. His ſeaſonable Admonition, and that is, that *Iſrael* (becauſe he *will do this*) prepare to meet him.

3. We have this Admonition back'd and enforc'd, by an Argument drawn from the Conſideration of Gods infinite Power, Might, Majeſty, and Greatneſs; of which we have here a moſt ample Deſcription, *ver.* 13, *He formeth the mountains, and createth the wind,* &c. and he that doth all this, *the Lord, the God of Hoſts is his Name.*

Explication.

Therefore thus will I do unto thee, &c. this *therefore* refers to their incorrigibleneſs under former Judgments, as the ground of the Lords preſent Reſolution: *Thus will I do unto thee*: How? This Interpreters ſeveral ways make out, 1*ſt*, *thus, i. e.* ſay ſome, *as I have before threatned, Verſe* 2, 3, Or *thus, i. e. as thy incorirgibleneſs deſerves,*

and

and calls for: Or 3*dly*, *thus*, *i. e. worſe then ever I have done, yet I will come with a ſeverer ſtrook* ſo *Calvin* and others: Or 4*thly*, the Lord by expreſſing himſelf thus, would the more point out the dreadfulneſs of the ſtroak, as being above what could be expreſt; and therefore wraps it up in ſilence, and leaves it to them to imagine what it would be.

———*Prepare to meet thy God:* I find Expoſitors Interpreting this in a double ſenſe: 1*ſt*, As ſpoken Ironically, *i. e.* in a way of holy deriſion at this Peoples obſtinacy, and fool-hardineſs; as if the Lord had ſaid, Seeing then you will not be reclaim'd, but ſtill ſtand it out againſt Me, and I alſo am reſolved to go on, to do as I have ſaid; and do Proclaim open war againſt you, as Enemies and Rebels, *Prepare then to meet me*: muſter up your forces, and gather together your ſtrength, and make the beſt preparations you can, and ſee if you be able to withſtand Me, or keep off that final Deſtruction which I have determined to bring upon you. And ſo this is like to the meſſage which *Jehu* ſent to the *rulers of Jezreel, and thoſe that brought up Ahabs children*, 2 Kings 10. 1, 2, 3, &c. And this agrees well enough with the ſequel; for *lo, he that formeth the mountains*, &c. as if the Lord had ſaid, And you had need to make all, and the beſt preparation that you can; for you have a God to conteſt with, and he a God of infinite Power, Might, Majeſty and Greatneſs; *he formeth the mountains*, &c. and *the Lord, the God of Hoſts is his Name.*

But others underſtand it rather as ſpoken in a plain genuine ſenſe, *viz.* that *Iſrael* ſhould *meet him*

in an humble penitential way, ſo as to endeavour to appeaſe him; and ſo prevent that final overthrow, which elſe was like to come upon them: and ſo we are to look upon the words, not ſo much as a challenge, but as ſeaſonable counſel and advice to *Iſrael*, to prevent yet, if poſſible, their ruin, and ſo I ſhall underſtand it at preſent: and thus it ſeems the rather to be taken, becauſe the Lord does in the very next Chapter, ſeveral times invite them to ſeek him, that they might live, as *ver.* 4, *Seek ye me, and ye ſhall live*, and *ver.* 6, &c. Indeed their caſe ſeem'd even deſperate, and God ſeem'd to have ſhut up againſt them the gate of mercy; but the Lord hints yet to them, that if they did but timely *prepare to meet him*, there might be hopes yet of pacifying of him.

CHAP. II.

The ſeveral Collateral Obſervations.

Obſ. 1. WHatever is done to a people in a way of Judgment, *It is the Lord that does it*: *Therefore thus will I do unto thee*: and *ver.* 6, *I alſo have given you cleanneſs of teeth*, &c. and *Amos* 3. 6, *Shall there be evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it*? Our ſins indeed they occaſion and procure what is done; put him upon ſuch work, as he tells *Jeruſalem*, *Jer.* 4. 18, *Thy way and thy doings have procured theſe things unto thee: th is is thy wickedneſs*, &c. and the Lord makes uſe of what Inſtruments he pleaſes, in executing what is done, but ſtill he does it: whoever are the Inſtruments,

ſtruments, he is ſtill the great Agent, and Efficient: *Affliction cometh not forth of the duſt, neither doth trouble ſpring out of the ground*, Job 5. 6. Judgments are not caſual, but providential. *Iſa.* 42. 24, *Who gave Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the Robbers? did not the Lord, he, againſt whom we have ſinned*, &c? and the Lord ſtill obſerves what he does in ſuch a way, and ſets down and keeps as it were a Catalogue of his Judgments, as well as of his Mercies, and of peoples deportment under them, how they carry it; as here in this Chapter: The Lord declares all he had done, and all their incorrigibleneſs notwithſtanding: *Yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord*: and *Jer.* 8. 6, *I hearkned and heard, but they ſpake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, what have I done? Every one turned to his courſe, as the horſe ruſhes into the battel.*

Uſe 1. Let us then in all that is done, ſee, own, and acknowledg the Lords hand, and humble our ſelves under the ſame: thus it is ſaid, *The man of wiſdom* ſhall do, *Mic.* 6. 9, *The Lords voice crieth unto the City*: *And the man of wiſdom ſhall ſee thy Name, i. e.* he ſhall ſee thee, and own thy hand in what is done: the not doing of which, the Lord complains of, and threatens, *Iſa.* 26. 11, *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee; but they ſhall ſee*, &c.

2. Let us turn to him that ſmites, and ſeek the Lord of Hoſts as he often invites, *Hoſea* 14. 1, *O Iſrael, return unto the Lord thy God,—Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; ſay unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly*, &c. So *Joel* 2. 12, *Therefore alſo now, ſaith the Lord, Turn*

ye even to me with all your heart, &c. and *ſeek ye me, and ye ſhall live*, Amos 5. 4, 6. And this the Lord expects, *Hoſea* 15, *In their affliction they will ſeek me early. Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee*, Iſa. 26. 16. And peoples not doing of this, is the great matter and ground of his complaint, and it rolls ſo in his thoughts, that he knows not how (as it were) to digeſt it. As here in this Chapter, it is five times together the matter of the Lords complaint,—*Yet have ye not return'd to me, ſaith the Lord*, ver. 6. So ver. 8, 9, 10, 11. So elſewhere, *Hoſea* 11. 7, *Though they called them to the moſt High, none at all would exalt him.* They looked after, and minded other ways and means of help. *Iſa.* 22. 8, *Thou didſt look in that day to the armour of the houſe of the Foreſt*, &c. ver. 9, 10, 11. And they thought in this they were very wiſe and politick; but they neglected the main, *To look to the Lord*, and to ſeek and turn to him, *ver.* 11, 12, 23. And for this the Lord threatned to bring upon them final ruin, *For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill: For the people turneth not to him that ſmites them; neither do they ſeek the Lord of Hoſts. Therefore the Lord will cut off from Iſrael head and tail, branch and ruſh in one day*, Iſa. 9. 12, 13, 14.

And therefore, as ever we would prevent our own, and the Nations ruin, let us ſpeedly ſet upon this; yea, and encourage one another to this, as the beſt courſe we can take, as the beſt way we can go: as thoſe, *Hoſea* 6. 1, 2, 3, *Come*, ſay they, *let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up*, &c. And *why gaddeſt thou about* (ſaith the Lord)

Lord) *ſo much to change thy way, i. e.* the way which I have preſcribed thee, and that which ſhould be thy way; but thou trieſt other ways and concluſions: but in vain, and to no purpoſe, they ſhall avail thee nothing, *Jer.* 2. 36, 37, *Thou ſhalt be aſhamed of Egypt, as thou waſt aſhamed of Aſſyria*: Yea, *thou ſhalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head* (a ſign of ſhame and ſorrow), *for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences*; thoſe ways and refuges thou confideſt in, and thou ſhalt not proſper in them.

Obſerv. 2. Whatever the Lord does, or threatens to do, to a people in a way of Judgment, it is not without cauſe; there is a *therefore* for it: *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael*: and *therefore hath he poured upon him the fury of his anger*, Iſa. 42. 25. *Therefore the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you*, Mat. 21. 43. And ſo I might give you hundreds more of ſuch *therefores*, and *wherefores*, but they are every where obvious, and therefore I ſhall not ſtand to mention them; and all declare, that *whatever the Lord does in a way of Judgment, it is not without cauſe*: But does not the Lord tell Satan, that he moved him againſt *Job*, to *deſtroy him without cauſe*, Job 2. 3? It was indeed without cauſe, as to what Satan did alledg, and pretend as to *Job*, which was groſs Hypocriſie: ſo without cauſe, but not abſolutely; for if God narrowly ſearch the beſt, there's ever cauſe, ſo as to juſtifie God as to what he does. God indeed ſometimes afflicts without reſpect to ſin; but ſtill there is cauſe enough from ſin in the beſt to merit it, though not always the moving cauſe, &c.

Vſe 1. This then lets us ſee the vaſt difference between Gods acting in a way of Judgment, and the ſinners in a way of ſin: For the one is not without cauſe, there is a *therefore* for it, but none for the other; There's no *therefore* for that: we do not indeed ſuffer without cauſe, but we ſin without cauſe: Gods Judgments are not without cauſe, but mans tranſgreſſions are; and hence is it that the Lord does ſo Expoſtulate with his people, as concerning their ſinful carriages towards him, as being without cauſe, nay, as having given them great cauſe to the contrary, as *Jer.* 2. 5, *Thus ſaith the Lord, What iniquity have your Fathers found in me, that they are gone from me?* and Verſe 31, *Have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael, a land of darkneſs? ſay my people, We are lords, we will come no more to thee.* So Mic. 6. 3, 4, 5, *O my people, What have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearred thee? Teſtifie againſt me. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt*, &c. As if the Lord had ſaid, I have done indeed much good for thee, ſhewn a great deal of kindneſs towards thee: But what evil or hurt did I ever do to thee? So that if it be ask't here, Who hath wounds, who hath grief, who has offence without cauſe? It muſt be anſwered, God haes. O tbe diſingenuity, Ingratitude, and unreaſonableneſs of ſin and ſinners. Gods Service is indeed moſt reaſonable, as that we ſhould love him, and live aud devote our ſelves to him—*Which is yur reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. 12. 1. But ſin is unreaſonable, and ſinners: *That we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men*, 2 Theſ. 3. 2. *Solomon* adviſes, Prov. 3. 30, *Strive not with a man without cauſe, if he have done the no harm:*

harm. But how do ſinners ſtrive with God without cauſe, when he has done them no harm, but much good? And how ſad is this? for *ſhall evil be recompenſed for good? Sinners* (it is ſaid) *love thoſe that love them, and do good to thoſe that do good to them, Luke* 6. 32, 33. It is thus indeed as to Men, but not to God. Sinners (as one expreſſes it) carry themſelves as Men towards Men, but as Devils towards God, acting below the very principles of common humanity, and their own nature as Men, as if they had not the hearts of Men; no principle being more deeply engraven in the hearts of Men, than this, to do good to thoſe who do good to them; but ſinners do evil to that God, who does good to them, and never did them hurt. They load, *and weary him with their iniquities, and make him to ſerve with their ſins,* who *dayly loads them with his benefits*; and ſin againſt a Thouſand mercies: So that God may ſay to ſinners, what Chriſt ſometime ſaid to the Jews; *For which of my good works is it that you ſtone me? John* 10. 32. That you go on to ſin againſt me, is it becauſe I made you? or becauſe I have ever ſince preſerved you? (For we could as ſoon make our ſelves, as preſerve our ſelves) or is it becauſe I daily ſtill ſuſtain you, feed you, cloath you, and every way take care of you, and provide for you? O the reflection upon this another day, that there was no Cauſe, no Therefore, for ſinners carrying it ſo towards God as they did, will be a great part of that worm of Conſcience in Hell, which ſhall never dye. And this made thoſe in *Judges* 2, when the Angel of the Lord had convinc'd them of the unreaſonableneſs of their actings, *Why,* ſays the

the Angel, *have ye done this*? This made them *lift up their voice and weep*, and make the place where they were, a very *Bochim*, *verſ.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Uſe 2. Then let us juſtifie the Lord in all he does, and acknowledg that he is righteous, not doing what he does without cauſe; but there being a Therefore for it. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael.* Has the Lord ſent among us the Sword? and after that the Plague? Yea, and after that, Fire, and ſeveral other judgments, as Gripes, ſtrange ſickneſſes, Seaſons, Storms, Tempeſts, Breaking us at Sea, and cauſing ſtrange Inundations at Land? *And is not his anger yet turned away, but is his hand ſtretched out ſtill?* As we have ſeen a-late, in that dreadful Fire in *Southwark*; and again, a-late at *Northampton*, to the great conſternation of that people. None of theſe are without cauſe, but there's a Therefore for them all; and therefore let us ſay as the Church, *Lam.* 1. 18, *The Lord is righteous, for we have rebelled*, &c. And as *Daniel* 9. 7, *O Lord, righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee; but unto us confuſion of faces*, &c.

Uſe. 3. Let this then quiet us, and cauſe us patiently to bear what ever the Lord hath, or may further inflict upon us; as the Prophet *Micah* reſolves *chap.* 7. 9, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.* That is very obſervable to this purpoſe, which we read, *Ezek.* 13. 22, 23, where the Lord ſays of a Remnant there that ſhould eſcape, That as concerning all the evil he ſhould bring upon *Jeruſalem*, when they

they ſhould ſee what cauſe there was for what he did, they ſhould be *comforted concerning it all*; a ſtrange expreſſion! The Lord had done ſore and heavy things againſt *Jeruſalem*, inflicted grievous judgments, he mentions four, *viz. The Sword, Famine, noiſom Beaſts*, and *Peſtilence:* And not only gainſt the Land, and City, but againſt the Temple: Read the Book of *Lamentations*. And yet when that Remnant ſhould ſee the ways and doings of thoſe againſt whom God had done it, they ſhould ſee ſuch cauſe for what God had done, that it is ſaid, as concerning all that God had done, They *ſhould be comforted, i. e.* contented, ſilenced, well ſatisfied, and not have a word to ſay, as concerning all that the Lord had brought upon them. Pray peruſe the place, it is worthy your ſerious obſervation, *Verſ.* 22, *Yet behold, therein ſhall be left a remnant that ſhall be brought forth, both ſons and daughters: Behold, they ſhall come forth unto you, and ye ſhall ſee their way and their doings* (Their manner and courſe of life and converſation, how evil it hath been), *and ye ſhall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jeruſalem, even concerning all that I have brought upon it. And they ſhall comfort you, when ye ſee their ways, and their doings: and ye ſhall know that I have not done without cauſe, all that I have done in it, ſays the Lord.* And truly ſuch have been, and ſtill are at this day, the daring, crying ſins, and abominable wickedneſſes of this Nation, yea, and of this City, as to the generality of us: Such is our pride every manner of way, in our Gait, Habit, Hair, Apparel, yea in our very Nakedneſs; ſuch are

our

our gariſh, ranting, flanting, immodeſt Attires and Dreſſes, ſo contrary to the fear of the Lord, and the profeſſion of Godlineſs: Such our Luxury, Senſuality, Exceſſes, Revellings, Drunkenneſs, deſperate Security; ſuch our horrid and open profanations of Gods Name and Day, ſuch our Atheiſm, Oaths, Errors, Hereſies, Blaſphemies, Perjuries, Superſtitions, Idolatries, Oppreſſions, Cruelties, Theſts, Murders, Whoredoms, Adulteries, Uncleanneſſes, Hatred of God and his Ways, and the power of Godlineſs. *By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, ſinners breaking out, and blood touching blood, Hoſ.* 4. 2. In a word, ſuch are our prodigious and execrable impieties of all ſorts and kinds whatſoever: That what-ever evils the Lord hath, or may yet further bring upon us, or what ever he do with us; we have cauſe to be comforted, *i. e.* filenc'd, ſatisfied, and never open our mouths more. *Why crieſt thou* (ſaith God) *for thine affliction? Thy ſorrows are incurable, for the multitude of thine iniquity: becauſe thy ſins were increaſed, I have done theſe things unto thee, Jer.* 30. 15. *And wherefore ſays the Lord, will you plead with me? Jer.* 2. 29. They were ready to plead againſt God, as if he had been rigorous towards them; but *wherefore*, ſays the Lord, *will you plead with me? ye have all tranſgreſſed againſt me*, and let that ſilence you, and well it may: For there's more true real evil in one ſin, the leaſt ſin, than in all other evils whatſoever: the evil of puniſhment being little to the evil of ſin; the bitterneſs for ſin, to the bitterneſs in ſin; one ſtrives but at the creature, the other at the Creator, at God; one at what is finite, the other at what is infinite, *&c.*

Uſe

Uſe. 4. Let us labour then to find out the Cauſe, and get it removed: Let us not ſtand complaining, but fall upon ſearching and trying, for there is a Therefore for what the Lord does: For what ever he has done, or goes on ſtill farther to do. As the Lord ſaid to *Joſhua*, when *Iſrael* fled before the Men of *Ai*, and were ſmitten, and *Joſhua* fell to the earth upon his face, and was much troubled, *Get thee up*, ſaith the Lord, *wherefore lieſt thou thus upon thy face? Iſrael hath ſinned, &c.* As if the Lord had ſaid, Is there not cauſe for what is done? And let us therefore beſpeak one another as they did, *Lam.* 3. 39, 40, 41, 42, *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins? Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord: let us lift up our heart, with our hands, unto God in the Heavens. We have tranſgreſſed, and we have rebelled,* &c.

Obſerv. 3. Although the Lord hath inflicted ſeveral judgments already upon a people for their ſins; yet unleſs they return unto him, he hath more and heavier ſtill to inflict; yea, and will inflict them, unleſs they return unto him. How many judgments doth the Lord here reckon up, that he had inflicted upon this people already? *Want of bread, of rain, blaſting, mildew, peſtilence, ſword,* &c? And yet he had more and heavier ſtill to inflict. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael.* And how often does the Lord tell his people, in *Levit.* 26, that if they yet *walked contrary to him, and would not hearken to him, he would bring ſeven times more plagues upon them, verſ.* 21, 24, 28, &c. The Lords quiver is full of

Arrows.

Arrows. We have Four mentioned together, *Ezek.* 14. 21, *The ſword, the famine, the noiſom beaſt, and the peſtilence.* And hath not *England* experienc'd this, That the Lord hath variety of judgments to inflict? For how many hath the Lord inflicted upon us, one after another, and ſometimes ſeveral together? The Lord he ſent the Sword, which did eat the fleſh, and drink the blood of many; and when that would not do, he ſent the Peſtilence, *That walked in darkneſs, and waſted at noon-day:* Did execution continually; laying waſte whole Families, and making deſolate all their company, ſweeping away in and about this City, in leſs than a years ſpace, near, if not above, A Hundred Thouſand; making burying-work, till there was ſcarce room to bury in. Thus the Lord firſt ſent fire into our bones, as the Church complains, *Lam.* 1. 13, *From above hath he ſent fire into my bones, and it prevaileth againſt them.* And when this would not do, he ſends a dreadful Fire into our Habitations, which ſwallows up both them and our Eſtates; ſo that before we were ſcarce got out of one Fire, another devours us; one our Houſes, another our ſelves; one our Perſons, the other our Portions and Eſtates; as the Lord threatned the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, *Ezek.* 15. 7, *And I will ſet my face againſt them, they ſhall go out from one fire, and another ſhall devour them,* &c. And when theſe would not do, how many more judgments has the Lord inflicted upon us ſince? So many, that it is hard to reckon them up, ſtrange Gripes, and other grievous ſickneſſes; ſtrange Seaſons, grievous Storms, Tempeſts breaking us at Sea, and cauſing ſtrange Innunda-

tions

tions at Land, ſuch as have not been in our days, no not in our Fathers days before us. Thus that the Lord hath many and various judgments to inflict upon a people for their ſins, Gods dealing with us here in this Nation, abundantly evidences.

Uſe 1. Let us all then learn to fear this God, who hath ſo many, and ſo various judgments to inflict on a people for their ſins; who though he hath inflicted ſeveral already, hath yet more to inflict and heavier, whoſe quiver is ſo full of Arrows. *I will, ſays the Lord, heap miſchiefs upon them, I will ſpend my arrows upon them. The ſword without, and terrour within*, &c. *Deut.* 32. 23, 25. There are many Plagues, that are *written in this Book*, and many that are *not written*; *Deut.* 28. 61. And ſhall not all then fear him? *O let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world ſtand in aw of him*, Pſal. 33. 8. *Who would not fear thee, O king of nations? for to thee doth it appertain*, &c. *Jer.* 10. 7. And you know what Chriſt ſays to his friends, *Be not afraid of them that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But fear him* that hath more yet that he can do, *that after he hath killed, can caſt into Hell, Luke* 12. 4, 5. And therefore Chriſts ſays again, *fear him.*

Uſe 2. Let us no longer then ſtand it out againſt him, but ſpeedily and forthwith come in, and ſubmit unto him; for if we do not, he hath ſtill more judgments to inflict, more miſchiefs to heap, more arrows to ſpend, his quiver is not emptied, nor are his arrows all drawn out, or exhauſted; but will

will therefore overcome when he judges, ſubdue, or deſtroy. If devouring us as a Lyon will not do, he can be as a Moth, as he threatens, *Hoſ.* 5. 12, *Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a Moth*, &c. ſecretly and inſenſibly conſuming us. If *whips* will not do, he has *ſcorpions*; if not *foot-men*, he has *horſes*, *Jer.* 12. 5. If not *winds to fan and to cleanſe*, he has winds utterly *to lay waſte*. He can bring over us, the ſame judgments again, as Sword, Peſtilence, Fire, Flames, the laſt of which he hath eminently done a-late, as (not to mention other) at *Northampon:* which (our mother City being before conſum'd) was next, (as being one of her principal daughters) dreadfully conſum'd alſo; and where very lately the Fire hath broken out again, and burnt a great part of the remainder thereof. So lately in *Southwark*, in a few hours how many hundreds of Houſes were there ſuddenly conſum'd? And a dreadful and lamentable Fire was there alate in *Warwick-lane*? So I call it, becauſe though there was but one Houſe burnt, yet Seven Perſons were conſum'd in that One Houſe: Dreadful indeed! for we do not read of ſo many conſum'd, no not in that great deſolating Fire in 66, when 87 Pariſhes were burn'd down to the ground within the Walls, and ſeveral without, and according to the computation of ſome, above Thirteen thouſand Houſes, and yet not ſo many Perſons conſum'd as in this one Houſe! O! it is lamentable and dreadful indeed, when God by Fire ſhall conſume not only our Houſes and Eſtates, but our ſelves; not only our Portions, but Perſons; not only dead Walls, but living Wights! Or God can inflict yet other and heavier, as Famine,

mine, a ſore and heavy Arrow indeed! one of the dreadfulleſt Arrows in the Lords Quiver; which (bleſſed be God) we have not as yet experienc'd, at leaſt in late years: though formerly in the year 700, Hiſtory tells of a Famine here in *England*, of three years continuance, ſo violent, that not only many daily died for hunger, but great numbers joyning hand in hand, 40 or 50 in a company, threw themſelves headlong into the Sea. And this judgment ſtar'd them a-late in the face, in *New-England*, as one writes, ſeveral Horſes being there eaten, in purſuit of the enemy, for want of proviſions. But though the Lord hath ſometimes threatned this, yet bleſſed be God he hath not yet inflicted it. How dreadful an Arrow this is, appears by the monſtrous and horrid effects thereof, as *Lam.* 4. 10, *The hands of the pitiful women have ſodden their own children, they were their meat in the deſtruction of the daughter of my people. O tremble ye women that are at eaſe, and hear and be troubled ye careleſs daughters, Iſa.* 32. 9, 11. For what are we better than they? This cannot but be looked upon as exceeding ſad, heavy, and horrid, as indeed it is! But what is ſin then, that occaſions this? Thus the Lord has this, and ſeveral other judgments yet to inflict; as *Captivity*, *Earthquakes*, of which, in ſeveral Counties there has been ſomewhat a-late: Or the Lord can puniſh, by reſolving to puniſh no more, I mean with outward puniſhments: As he threatens, *Hoſ.* 4. 14, *I will not puniſh your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your ſpouſes when they commit adultery*, &c. and *verſ.* 17, *Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.* And *Iſa.* 1. 5, *Why ſhould ye be ſtricken any more?* &c. And this is ve-

ry ſad! For though former judgments have not wrought upon a people, yet there may be hopes, God purſuing them ſtill with judgments, that they may at length be prevail'd with; but where Remedies are no more uſed, it argues the caſe deſperate: And God hath not only temporal, but ſpiritual judgments to inflict, which though leaſt fear'd, or felt, are the foreſt and heavieſt of all. As to be under *a ſpirit of ſlumber, to hear, but not to underſtand; to ſee, but not perceive; to have hearts made fat and groſs, and ears dull of hearing, &c.* Rom. 11. 8, &c. *To be given up to ſtrong deluſions, and to believe lies,* 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10, 11, 12, as many are in theſe days, becauſe they received not *the love of the truth that they might be ſaved*: nor *believed the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* So for people to be given up to their own hearts luſts, and to walk in their own counſels, as *Pſal.* 8. 12, *So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts,* &c. A dreadful *ſo* indeed! one of the ſaddeſt in the whole book of God: worſe than to be given up to the *Plague, Sword,* &c. So we read of a ſpiritual judgment upon *Egypt, Iſa.* 19. 11, 12, 13, 14, &c. God having mingled *a perverſe ſpirit,* a ſpirit of frowardneſs, fooliſhneſs and madneſs, *in the midſt thereof*; ſo as to deprive them of all wiſdom and underſtanding, that they could neither give counſel, nor know which way to turn themſelves, but erred *in every work of their hands, and were like a drunken man* lying in his Vomit, who the more he ſtirs, the more he defiles himſelf; and ſo the more they went on to give counſel, the more harm and miſchief they did: So that all were confus'd, and nei-

neither perſons of high nor low degree, had their wits or ſenſes about them, neither did any of their buſineſſes proſper, or were brought to perfection. *Herodotus* writes of a certain King of *Egypt*, called *Pſammetychus*, that he lay with a mighty Army 29 years compleat before the City of *Azotus*: A wiſe enterpriſe, was it not? Thus the Lord wants not plagues ſtill to inflict upon an incorrigible people; ſo that if we ſtill ſtand it out againſt him, we ſhall certainly fall before him, and he will carry it, and have the day.

Obſer. 4. If Gods *Iſrael*, if his people refuſe to return to him, they muſt expect no more to be ſpar'd than others. *Therefore, thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael.* God is here no reſpecter of perſons. *Jer.* 15. 7, *I will deſtroy my people* (ſuch they profeſſed themſelves to be), *ſith they return not from their ways.* And *chap.* 12. 7, *I have forſaken mine houſe: I have left mine heritage: I have given the dearly beloved of my ſoul into the hand of her enemies: and as I live, ſaith the Lord, though Coniah the ſon of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were the ſignet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence, Jer.* 22. 24, 25, &c.

Uſe. Let not any then bear themſelves up with this, that they are Gods *Iſrael*, his People, as if this would ſecure them, for it will not; *Therefore thus will I do to thee, O Iſrael.* And *Jer.* 7. 12, *Go ye now* (ſays the Lord) *unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I ſet my name at the firſt, and ſee what I did to it, for the wickedneſs of my people Iſrael.* So may the Lord ſay, Go to *Jeruſalem*,

ſalem, go to thoſe Seven once ſo famous Churches of *Aſia*, yea, go to *Germany*, and go now to *New-England*, and ſee what God is doing there —Nay this is ſo far from ſecuring a People, that this the rather more incenſes his wrath, and neceſſitates his puniſhing of them. *Amos* 3. 2, *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities.* And *Ezek.* 9. 6, *Begin at my ſanctuary*, &c.

Obſer. 5. God does not willingly inflict more and heavier ſtroaks upon his people. For while he threatens here to deal ſeverelier with them, he does withal admoniſh them to *meet him*; which ſhews he had rather be ſo prevented, and that mercy rather pleaſes him, his uſual and ordinary work: And he does indeed threaten, that he may not inflict. *Lam.* 3. 33, *For he doth not afflict willingly*, &c. *And how ſhall I give thee up Ephraim? how ſhall I deliver thee Iſrael?* &c. *Hoſ.* 11. 7.

Uſe. Let us not then by our incorrigibleneſs, force him to what he is unwilling, and hath (as it were) a reluctancy.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The main and principal Obſervation.

Obſer. 6. WHen God is in the way of his judgments, it is his Peoples great duty and concern for to meet him: As here he admoniſhes them. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael: and becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael.* And that the Lord doth here invite his people to meet him, it doth in a word denote, 1. His being angry with them. 2. His coming forth as a formidable enemy againſt them. 3. His being yet placable, and that there is a poſſibility yet of appeaſing him, if his people do but timely addreſs themſelves to him. But 4. That he will elſe certainly go on to do what he threatneth.

Now in the further carrying on this Propoſition of ſo great importance, I ſhall do theſe Three things.

1. I ſhall ſhew you how we are to meet God.

2. Why we are ſo to meet him; give you the Reaſons and grounds thereof. And then

3. Apply it.

1. How we are to meet God in the way of his judgments.

1. *More generally*, We are ſo to meet him, as may beſt appeaſe him; and therefore ſo meet him, as others have met thoſe who have been incens'd againſt them; as *Jacob* met his incenſed Brother *Eſau*, *bowing himſelf even ſeven times to*

the ground, Gen. 33. 3. As *Abigail* met *David*, *falling down at his feet*, with *I pray thee forgive the treſpaſs of thine handmaid*, &c. 1 *Sam.* 25. 23, 24. As they who brought up *Ahabs* Children met *Jehu*. *We are*, ſay they, *thy ſervants*, *and will do all that thou ſhalt bid us*, 2 *Kings* 10. 4, 5. As *Benhadads* ſervants met the King of *Iſrael*, *with ſackcloth on their loyns*, *and ropes upon their heads*, &c. 1 Kings 20. 31, 32. As that King *which had but ten thouſand*, went to meet him *which came againſt him with twenty thouſand*, *who while he was yet a great way off*, *ſends an Ambaſſage*, *and deſires conditions of peace*, Luk. 14. 31, 32. As the Prodigal Son met his Father. *Father*, ſays he, *I have ſinned againſt heaven and before thee*, *and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon*, &c. *Luk.* 15. 17, 18, 19. Thus we are to meet God, not ſo as to oppoſe him, but pacifie him; not ſo as to fight him, but fall down at his feet, and humble our ſelves before him; not to wage War with him, but ſupplicate grace and mercy from him, that we may *find grace in his ſight*, *and we will be his ſervants*. Not with Arms, not with Swords and Spears, but Prayers and Tears, the proper Arms and Ammunition of his people; and but with which there's no contending with him, nor overcoming of him.

2. And more *particularly*, we are to meet God theſe Six ways.

I. *With Preparation*, As the Lord himſelf here admoniſhes, —*Prepare to meet thy God*, *O Iſrael*. A provoked incenſed God is not to be met at an adventure, hand over head, any way, or after any faſhion;

faſhion; no, his People are to *prepare to meet him*; they are to do ſo in the way of his Ordinances, and ſo in the way of his Judgments: For 1. He is a great God, *he formeth the mountains, createth the wind*, &c. And it is a great work to meet him, and to meet him aright, and as we ought, ſo as to appeaſe him; and therefore we are to prepare to meet him.

And 1. we are to get habitually prepared, which is by getting out of that eſtate wherein we are all now by nature. For that is no eſtate to meet a provoked, incenſed God in: It is not a ſtate indeed fit to meet God in, any where, or in any way, not in the ways of his Ordinances, in his ways of Grace and Mercy; for ſuch as are yet *in the fleſh, i. e.* in their corrupt ſtate, *cannot pleaſe God, Rom.* 8. 8. How much more unfit are they to meet God in the way of his Judgments? As unfit as *briars and thorns* to meet *devouring flames*; *ſtubble fully dry, a conſuming fire. Who would ſet the briars and thorns againſt me in battel? I would go thorow them, and burn them together, Iſa.* 27. 4. And therefore for People to be, and abide ſtill in their ſins, when God is in the way of his Judgments, how ſad is it! and what a dreadful meeting muſt ſuch expect? We may ſay to ſuch, as *Iſa.* 10. 3, *And what will ye do in the day of viſitation, and in the deſolation which ſhall come from far*, &c? And therefore haſten out of ſuch an eſtate, for it is not a ſtate to be reſted in a moment longer; and therefore eſcape for your lives, *Deliver your ſelves as a Roe from the hand of the Hunter, and as a bird*

Iſta preparatio ſub ſe complectitur veram renovationem cordis, &c. Calv.

from the hand of the fowler: Give not ſleep to your eyes, nor ſlumbet to your eye-lids, till you are delivered.

2. We are actually to prepare our ſelves to meet God, 1. *By getting upon our hearts* a ſenſe and awe of the Infinite Power, Might, Majeſty and Greatneſs of that God we are to meet. It being he that *forms the Mountains, and creates the wind,* &c. And therefore after what ſort, and in what manner is ſuch a God to be met? And the Lord does therefore thus on purpoſe expreſs himſelf, to produce ſuch an awe and ſenſe of his Greatneſs, *&c.* 2. *By getting* our hearts affected with thoſe judgments he hath, or is about to inflict, and the ſins which procured them. And this hath been much the frame of the People of God formerly. As of thoſe in *Ezra.* 10, Who *gathering themſelves together unto Jeruſalem* to meet God: It is ſaid, *verſ.* 9, *That all the people ſate in the ſtreet of the houſe trembling; becauſe of this matter, i. e.* 1. Becauſe of their ſin. And then 2. *For the great rain,* which though (as moſt Expoſitors ſuppoſe) it fell in *November*, and the beginning of *December*; they beginning the Months in *March,* a time uſually of much Rain; yet it being great and extraordinary, they are ſo affected therewith as to tremble. But who among us, hath been, or is ſo affected either with our ſins, or judgments, as to tremble? Never ſo great calamities made leſs impreſſion upon the hearts of Men, as if given over to hardneſs. How different was the frame of the Saints formerly? *O Lord,* ſays the Prophet *Habbakkuk, I have heard thy ſpeech, and was afraid.* And *verſ.* 16, *When I heard, my belly trembled, my*

lips

lips quivered at the voice: rottenneſs entred into my bones, and I trembled in my ſelf, &c. *Habbak.* 3. 2. And *David*, though he was a King, and a man of a War-like undaunted Spirit; he feared not *the Bear*, nor *the Lyon*, nor *great Goliah*: yet, ſays he, *My fleſh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments*, Pſal. 119. 120. Though other things did not daunt him at all, yet Gods Judgments did; and no wonder, there being wrath in them, and that is dreadful, and we are to tremble at his word, *Iſa. 66. 26.* and how much more than at his rod? And if we are to *ſerve him with fear, and rejoyce with trembling*, Pſal. 2. 11. How much more then being incens'd by our ſins, are we ſo to meet him? *At his reproof the pillars of heaven are ſaid to tremble and be aſtoniſht*, Job 26. 11. and ſhall not we? And this holy fear does not only prepare to meet God, but puts people upon it, as 'tis ſaid of *Jehoſaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 3, *That he feared, and ſet himſelf to ſeek the Lord, and proclaimed a faſt throughout all Judah.* Which we are to underſtand of a holy godly fear, relating to God, and not meerly natural, relating to men. And this put him upon meeting God: ſo it is ſaid of *Noah*, that *moved with fear, he prepared an Ark to the ſaving of his houſe*, &c. *Heb.* 11. 7. But how little of this holy fear and awe of God and his Judgments, is to be found among us! No, generally we fear nothing, we are ſtupid, ſenſeleſs, and regardleſs of God and his Judgments, nothing affects us. Were there not thoſe, who ſat Drinking and Singing in the very face of thoſe late dreadful Ruines in *Southwark*! O the daring impudency of ſin and ſinners in this Age! *The de-*

devils believe and tremble, but men do not: And this deadneſs and deep ſecurity, when all things ſpeak an approaching ſtorm, as it evidences, ſays one, a great Judgment, and ſpiritual plague from God upon our Spirits; ſo it preſages no leſs than remedileſs Ruine: for Sinners having no fear nor dread of God nor his Judgments, they never mind to meet him in the way of them. *They caſt off fear*, and hence *reſtrain prayer*, *Job* 15.4. A ſad frame, *when Ephraim ſpake trembling, he exalted himſelf in Iſrael; but when he offended in Baal, he died*, *Hoſ.* 13. 1. Fearleſs perſons are ever careleſs, and regardleſs to meet God in the way of his Judgments.

3. *By conſidering and adviſing what to do*, and what courſe is beſt to be taken. As the young man Counſel'd *Abigail*, when evil was determined againſt her Houſhold: *Now therefore*, ſays he, *know and conſider what thou wilt do*, &c. 1 *Sam.* 25. 17. And the Lord is not wanting herein; he hath ſhewn us in his word, *what is good, and what it is he requires of us*, and we ſhould hearken to him.

4. By ſetting our ſelves with all ſerioufneſs to do it; we muſt up and be doing. The Lord complains of thoſe, *Hoſ.* 5. 4, *They would not ſo much as frame their doings to turn unto their God.*

5. *By laying aſide our weapons.* I mean our ſins, by which we oppoſe, and as it were fight againſt God; and to ſpeak of meeting God, and not to do this, is as if one who had incenſed another, and made him his enemy, ſhould go to appeaſe him with his offenſive weapons in his hand; which inſtead of appeaſing him, would certainly

certainly the more incenſe him: and therefore in our addreſſes to God, ſo as to appeaſe him, this we are ſtill put upon, *Iſa.* 1. 16, *Waſh you* (ſays the Lord) *make you clean, put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil,* &c. and *come now* (ſaith the Lord) *and let us reaſon together*: Now I will enter a parley with you, and now you are fit to be treated with: So *Jam.* 4. 8, *Draw nigh to God,* &c. But how? *Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners, purifie your hearts ye double-minded,* &c. and thus *Samuel* calls upon *Iſrael, to prepare their hearts unto the Lord, by putting away their ſtrange gods,* &c. 1 Sam. 7. 3. And *Zophar* counſels *Job, If thou prepare thine heart.* &c. *If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away,* &c. Job 11. 13, 14.

6. By ſeeking the Lord to prepare us, to fit us for, and help us in that great work: for *the way of man is not in himſelf; it is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps,* Jer. 10. 33. *The preparations,* or diſpoſings *of the heart in man are from the Lord,* Prov. 16. 1: and as *the King's,* ſo all our *hearts* are *in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth them whitherſoever he will,* Prov. 21. 1. And he can turn them to, and tune them for the work in hand: prepare them to meet him, *Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine ear to hear,* Pſal. 10. 17. *And quicken us, and we will call upon thy name,* Pſal. 80. 18.

II. *By Prayers and Supplications:* Theſe both prepare to meet God, and are themſelves one ſpecial and ſingular way of meeting him: and hence the ſame Hebrew word that ſignifies to pray, or intercede, ſignifies alſo to meet; it being by prayer that

that we do indeed meet God: and the word is especially applied to our meeting God when he appears angry: as *Jer.* 7. 16,—*Neither make intercession to me*, or do not meet me: do not interpose between me and them, to mediate for them, for I will not hear thee: What a sad condition was this people in? and our meeting God consists so much in this, that the Seventy render it here, ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸν θεόν σου. to call upon thy God; and this at such a time the Lord in a special manner calls for, *Seek ye me and ye shall live: Seek the Lord and ye shall live*, Amos 5. 4, 6. And *take with you words,—Say unto him, Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously*, Hosea 14. 4. And thus have his people met him formerly: How often did *Moses* thus meet him? He thus *stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, and that he might not destroy Israel.* So *Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord*, 2 Chron. 20. 3. *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastning was upon them*, Isa. 26. 16. And this the Lord expects, that when he's in the way of his Judgments, and visiting us, that we should thus visit him, meet him, by praying, and interceeding: *Hosea* 5. 15, ——*In their affliction they will seek me early.* And for people at such a time to restrain prayer, is exceeding sad, and argues great impiety: For what is it but to despise God and his Judgments? For the great God to come out against a people in the way of his Judgments; and they will not so much as stir a foot to go out to meet him, so as to divert and turn him back, but he may come on and destroy all, for all them. They fear not at all his anger, nor regard

regard his diſpleaſure: Thus it is ſaid of *Jeruſalem*, as an heavy crime,—*She drew not near to her God*, Zeph. 3. 2. And this *Daniel* bewails, *All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God*, &c. Dan. 9. 3. And upon this account, *the Hypocrites in heart are ſaid to heap up wrath: They cry not when he bindeth them*, Job 36. 13. *i.e.* they do not call upon him, or at leaſt not fervently, when he puniſhes them.

Q. How muſt our prayers be qualified, ſo as to prevail?

1. They muſt be ſincere, and in truth: *Let us draw near with a true heart*, &c. Heb. 10. 22: and *the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, in truth*, Pſal. 145. 18. As 1. When we pray, and call upon him indeed, and not only ſeem to do it; when we not only ſay, but pray a prayer, *pour out our hearts in prayer*. 2. When our inward diſpoſition, anſwers our outward expreſſion. 3. When we proſecute what we pray for, and pray on our feet, as well as on our knees; and let not our practiſes confute our prayers.

2. They muſt be the Prayers *of ſuch as know every one the plague of his own heart*, and ſo are humble, as ſuch ever are. And this *Solomon* puts in as one qualification of thoſe prayers which he beg'd of God to hear, 1 *Kings* 8. 38, *What prayer and ſupplications ſoever be made by any man*, or *by all thy people Iſrael, which ſhall know every man the plague of his own heart*; &c. *i. e.* the ſin, for that is the plague of the heart, and to know it, is to ſee it, and to have a due ſenſe of it: to be affected with it, and afflicted for it, and to complain and cry out

out of it: *Rom.* 7. 24, as *Paul*, *O wretched man that I am*, &c! And ſuch are ever humble, and ſuch the Lord hears: *Lord thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble*, Pſal. 10. 17. And if *their uncircumciſed hearts be humble*, Levit. 26. 41.

3. *Of ſuch as abandon ſin, and regard not iniquity in their hearts:* For if, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*, 66. 18. God will never be a prayer-regarding God, to a ſin-regarding ſinner. The blind man knew this, that *God heareth not ſinners*: *i. e.* that live and lye in ſin, make a trade of ſin, *&c. But if any man be a worſhipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth*, Joh. 9. 31. *Lifting up holy hands*, &c. 1 Tim. 2. 8.

4. *They muſt be in Faith*, with comfortable affiance in Gods bounty, goodneſs, and mercy, of being *heard*, *Jam.* 1. 6: ſo as that after we have prayed, we reſt thereon for Audience: Thus *he that cometh to God*, and meets him, *muſt believe that he is*, *i. e.* what his word reveals him to be, and that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*: Thus we muſt pray with good and high thoughts of God, though with low and mean thoughts of our ſelves.

5. Fervent, we muſt not only pray, but *cry*, yea, *cry mightily*, Exod. 14. 15. *Lift up a prayer*, Jonah 3. 8. Strive and *wreſtle* in prayer, *Set our ſelves to pray, weep and make ſupplication*, Iſa. 27. 4. Hoſea 12. 4. Preſs and urge our prayers with arguments upon arguments, as *Moſes*, How many arguments does he make uſe of in that ſhort prayer? *Exod.* 32. 11, 12, 13,—*Why doth thy wrath wax hot againſt thy people, and which thou haſt*

haſt brought forth out of the land of Egypt, &c? *And wherefore ſhould the Egyptians ſpeak, and ſay*, &c? and *remember Abraham, Iſaac*, &c. And the word which ſignifies to intercede, or meet, notes properly ſuch a kind of meeting, as is with force and violence; intimating thereby, with what holy violence, fervency, and earneſtneſs, we ſhould meet God, both in prayer for our ſelves, and wherein we become interceſſors, and ſtand before him for others, and theſe are the prayers that prevail: *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*: or the working prayer, that ſets the whole man a work; heart a work, affection a work, and all the graces a work; and is not ſo much the labour of the lip, as the travel of the heart: as it is ſaid of *Hannah, She ſpake in her heart*, &c. 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. And *Daniel ſet his face to the Lord God, to ſeek by prayer and ſupplication*, &c. *Dan.* 9. 3. Want of this, the Prophet bewails, *Iſa.* 64. 7, *And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee:* None! ſurely there were ſome; they were not come to that height of Prophaneſs, as to caſt off prayer quite. Many no doubt prayed, but not to purpoſe; it was as if they prayed not, they did not put forth themſelves in prayer, pray with all their might: as it follows,—*That ſtirreth up himſelf*: it was in a cold formal way, there was no life, vigor, nor activity in their prayer: though God manifeſted his diſpleaſure againſt them; and ſeem'd to be going from them, yet ſuch was their deadneſs, ſluggiſhneſs, and ſtupidity, that they were not awakened thereby.

6. Chiefly *for ſpiritual mercies*, ſo as to have our de-

deſires mainly carried forth after God, his favour, grace, pardon, peace, reconciliation with him, that we may be turned away from our iniquities; that he *would turn us again* to himſelf, *and cauſe his face to ſhine*; and that ſo *we may be ſaved:* as the Church prays thrice, *Pſal.* 80. 3, 7, 19. and *Iſa.* 26. 8, *In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the deſire of our ſoul is to thy name*, &c. And this the Lord much invites unto: *Seek the Lord, and ſeek his face*, &c. *Pſal.* 105. 4. *Seek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs*, &c. *Zeph.* 2. 3. *Say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly*, Hoſea 14. 1, 2. And to this the promiſe is made of Audience,—*If they ſhall ſeek my face*, &c. 2 Chron. 7. 14. And the Lord complains of thoſe that *aſſembled for corn and wine*, Hoſea 7. 14: but minded not him, nor his favours: and how ſhould we bleſs the Lord, that gives us this counſel and advice, and puts us upon ſeeking that which is not only ſoveraign and excellent in it ſelf, but of ſo great importance, and abſolute and indiſpenſable neceſſity as to us: *In his favour is life*, yea, it is *better than life*: and without it, we are but dead while we live. Spiritual mercies muſt be had, or we dye, we are undone, we are loſt, and periſh for ever, though we ſhould ſpend our days in gathering up Pearls and Jewels.

7. Prefer'd in Chriſts Name; which is of ſuch infinite worth, and of ſo great force, intereſt and efficacy in Heaven, that Jeſus Chriſt himſelf has aſſur'd us, that *whatſoever we ſhall ask the Father in that name, he will give it us*, Joh. 16. 23, 24. And then we ask *in his name*, when we ask for his ſake; and draw our encouragement therefrom:

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when in prayer we lay the whole ſtreſs of our hopes of Audience and acceptance upon him, and him alone, and his merits and mediation; and that intereſt which he has in, and with the Father in Heaven: and this was long ago fore-tipified in praying towards the Temple, 1 *Kings* 8. 30, 38, &c. and with hands ſpread forth to it, which was a Type of Chriſt our mediator:—*and ſpread forth his hands towards this houſe*, &c. and, *in thy fear will I worſhip towards thy holy Temple*, &c. Pſal. 5. 7.

8. With perſeverance, ſo as to hold on, and hold out therein: *Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the ſpirit, and watching thereunto with all perſeverance*, &c. Eph. 6. 18. We muſt *continue in prayer*, Col. 4. 2. *Pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſ. 5. 17. As Acts 12. 5, *Prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church to God*: and *Chriſt ſpake a parable to this end, That men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, &c. Luk. 18. 12, &c. As the Church in *Pſal.* 80, they pray, and pray again, and again, that *God would turn them again, and cauſe his face to ſhine*: *Then ſhall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*, &c. Hoſ. 6. 3. This is a token for good indeed, that we ſhall have what we crave when we hold on and will not be beaten out, nor take denial, as that woman of *Canaan*, Mat. 15. 22, 23, &c. Chriſt could not ſhake her off, neither by ſilence, nor by what he ſaid, but ſhe ſtill perſiſts in her ſuit; and Jeſus anſwers and ſays to her at laſt, *O woman, great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, &c. Take what thou wilt, I have not met with ſuch a woman as thou art, that wilt not be ſaid: *Luk.* 11. 8, *I ſay unto you, though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe*

cauſe he is his friend; yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth: The Greek is *impudency*, and ſo ſome render it, nevertheleſs for *his impudency ſake*, his immodeſt perſiſtance, taking no denial: As you have ſome ſort of Beggars, that are ſo importunate, and even impudent, that you cannot get gone without an Alms; ſay what you will, ſpeak them fair, or foul, all's one, they will weary you out, till they have it. And ſuch an holy impudency in prayer, ſo as to take no denial, as it is very acceptable to God, ſo exceeding prevalent with God.

Thus as we are to meet God by prayers and ſupplications; ſo our prayers, if we would prevail, are to be thus qualified: and being thus qualified, how prevalent have they been? and what great things have they done in the world? when God has come forth againſt a people, and been preparing to do great things againſt them, how have ſuch prayers put a ſtop to his Judiciary proceedings.

III. *By true Repentance and Converſion*, with deep humiliation, and by thorow and unfeigned reformation, which are the two main eſſential parts of Repentance: and thus we are in a ſpecial manner to meet God; this being a main and principal thing therein, and that which he in a ſpecial manner, when he is in the way of his Judgments, puts his people upon, and calls, and invites them to, to repent and turn to him: *Therefore alſo now, ſaith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart*, &c. Joel 2. 12. And *O Iſrael, Return unto the Lord thy God*, &c. Hoſea 14. 1. Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, *Turn ye unto me*, &c. Zeph. 1. 3.

1. 3. *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings*, &c. Iſa. 1. 16, &c. *Amend your ways and your doings*, Jer. 7. 3. And ſo in many other places: this is ſtill his call, that when he is *in the way of his Judgments* we ſhould *learn righteouſneſs*; that when he is puniſhing, we ſhould be repenting, amending, and reforming. And thus ſeveral Interpreters Expound it: *Prepare to meet thy God, i. e.* by ſerious repentance, with true converſion. By prayers, and penitential tears, and amendment of life: So *Calvin*, *Druſius*, *Mercerus*, *Piſcator*, *Junius*, Dutch and Engliſh *Annot.*

And here, 1. *We are to ſearch and find out our ſins.* Thoſe *Achans* that trouble our *Iſrael*, and threaten our ruin, we ſhould ſay as thoſe, *Lam.* 3. 40, *Let us ſearch and try our ways*, &c. And ſo ſome read thoſe words, *Zeph.* 2. 1, we render them *gather your ſelves together, yea, gather together:* but others, ſearch your ſelves narrowly, yea, ſearch your ſelves narrowly, *i. e.* get atoned and reconciled to God; and that you may do ſo, enter into your ſelves, and make a diligent and narrow ſearch into your hearts and ways, ſo as to find out thoſe ſins which have ſo heavily provoked the Lord, and offended him. 2. Having found them out, and being convinced of them, *we are to confeſs and acknowledg them*, and that *with ſhame and confuſion of face*: *If they ſhall confeſs their iniquity*, &c. *Levit.* 26. 40. *Jer.* 3. 13. 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *Prov.* 28. 13. 3. *We are to mourn for them, bewail them, and be in bitterneſs for them: Turn to me with weeping and mourning, and rent your heart, and not your garments*, Joel 2. 12. *I will* (ſays David) *declare mine iniquity, and be ſorry for my*

ſin, Pſal. 38. 18. And *I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf—and after I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh*, &c. Jer. 3. 18. And this ſorrow muſt be chiefly for the offence done to God, that we have ſin'd againſt him, that ſo great and good a God and merciful Father has been offended; it muſt be for the bitterneſs in ſin, more than for the bitterneſe for ſin; and it muſt be for others ſins, for the Nations ſins as well as our own: As *Rivers of water run down Davids eyes, becauſe others kept not Gods Law*, Pſalm 119. 136. But our ſins fetch few tears from our eyes; we have hard hearts and dry eyes, many complaining, but few weeping Penitents: we have many rivers, but in this reſpect a dry Iſland. And the Lord hath a mark for ſuch in the ſaddeſt times, *That ſigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midſt of them*, Ezek. 9. 4. 4. *We are to judg and condemn our ſelves for them.* 1 Cor. 11. 31. Luke 15. 18, 19. 5. *We are to beg, and earneſtly ſeek the pardon of them:* How earneſt was *Moſes* for this? If now *I have found grace in thy ſight, pardon our iniquity and our ſin*, &c. *If thou wilt forgive their ſin, and if not, blot me*, &c. Exod. 34. 9--32. 3. He knew they were an undone people, unleſs the Lord did this: So *Num.* 14. 19. And how earneſt was *David* for this, as *Pſal.* 51. 1, 2, &c. 6. *Above all, we are to abandon them*, reform them, and turn from them to the Lord; to forſake them: it muſt be not only repentance of ſin, or for ſin, but from ſin: *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*, &c. *Iſa.* 55. 7. And upon this God hath promiſed to *hear from heaven, and pardon, and heal,*

heal—To repent of the evil he thought to do: And that *iniquity ſhall not be our ruin,* 2 *Chron.* 7. 1. Jer. 18. 8. Ezek. 18. 30 And this is that which hath prov'd very effectual, and that when a peoples caſe hath ſeem'd even deſparate: as *Judg.* 10. God hath told that people, *he would deliver them no more: Go, ſays the Lord, and cry unto the Gods which ye have choſen,* &c. *ver.* 13, 14. But *ver.* 16, it is ſaid, *They put away the ſtrange gods from among them, and ſerved the Lord, and his ſoul was grieved for the miſery of Iſrael.* So *Jonah* 3. 4, *Yet forty days, and Niniveh ſhall be overthrown*; but *ver.* 10, it is ſaid, *God ſaw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil he ſaid he would do unto them, and he did it not.* But however otherwiſe we pretend to meet God, unleſs withal we do this, we do nothing; neither will all elſe that we do avail any thing, as to put a ſtop to Gods Judiciary proceedings. And therefore we are thus in a ſpecial manner to ſet our ſelves to meet God, by a ſpeedy breaking off our ſins, and amending our ways; and we ſhould, as I ſaid before, encourage one another to this, as thoſe *Hoſea* 6. 1, *Come, let us return unto the Lord,* &c. and then a troop of mercies comes; there will be *healing and binding up*: and *verſe* 2, 3, *reviving, raiſing up, and living in his ſight:* and then *his going forth* ſhall be *as the morning*; *and he ſhall come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.* But without this, we muſt expect inevitable ruin: as the Lord threatens again and again, ſee *Iſa.* 9. 13, 14. *Jer.* 15. 7, *Ezek.* 24. 12, 13, 14. You know what Chriſt ſaid to the Angel of the

Church of *Epheſus*, Rev. 2. 5, *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy firſt works, or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.* And wo to us, if he and his Goſpel go from us. *Pſal.* 22. 27, It is there ſaid, *All the ends of the world ſhall remember, and turn to the Lord.* And O that at length we might remember, and do ſo; remember our ſelves, and how much it is our own, and the Nations concern, and turn unto the Lord. Shall we always forget God, and our ſelves too? *How long ſhall our ſins be a ſnare to us?* Know we not yet that *England* is in danger to be deſtroy'd? And do we not ſee *his anger is not yet turned away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill. Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement; I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do no more,* Job 34. 31, 32. And till we do this, we do not only forget our ſelves, but we are not our ſelves, we are not only out of our way, but out of our wits: Sin being ſo great an evil, yea, the greateſt and chieſeſt, and indeed only true evil; the cauſe of all other, and it ſelf the worſt puniſhment: the work of the Devil, yea, worſe than the Devil and Hell, and which nothing can expiate but Chriſts blood, *&c.* And then to repent and turn to the Lord, is every way ſo much our concern, and that which makes ſo infinitely for our own and the Nations weal, that were we but our ſelves, or in our right minds, we could not but reſolve on it: as it is ſaid of the Prodigal Son, that as ſoon as ever he came to himſelf, *He ſaid, I will ariſe*

and go to my Father, &c. So that before, he was not himſelf; no more are we till we repent and turn to God: then, and not till then, is it, that we are our ſelves; and do indeed remember our ſelves, and our own, and the Nations great concern: and O that the Lord therefore would be pleas'd ſo to remember us, that we might at length thus remember our ſelves, and him too, ſo as to turn to him by converſion, without which will follow inevitable deſtruction.

IV. *In and with a Mediator*: even that *One, and only Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus*, 2 Tim. 1. 5. For ſo great is the diſtance between God and us, and ſuch is our ſinfulneſs and great unrighteouſneſs by reaſon thereof, that there can be no meeting God with acceptance, without a Mediator: and this Mediator is *Jeſus Chriſt* alone: and hence we are ſaid *to come unto God by him*, Heb. 7. 25. And *in him to have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence, by the faith of him*, Eph. 3. 12. And but in, and with him, there is no coming to God with acceptance.

In him: *i. e.* being in him by faith, united to him; as *Paul* ſpeaks oft of the Saints, *as being in Chriſt*, Col. 1. 2. Rom. 16. 7, 11, &c. and of himſelf he ſays, *I knew a man in Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 12. 2. And how happy is it to be indeed in him, eſpecially in ſuch evil days, and perilous times as theſe are: for can we be better, he being *the hiding-place from the wind, and the covert from the tempeſt*: *As rivers of water in a dry place, as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*, Iſa. 32. 2. and *The peace when the Aſſyrian comes into the land*, Mic. 5. 5. And being in him, are we ſafe, whatever dangers come:

happy whatever miſeries come, and ſhall be found in peace whatever troubles come: And what then can we know more, or better than this? or what avails all elſe we know, unleſs we know this, That we are *in Chriſt*? and when we are in him, then are we fit to meet God indeed, and not till then: for without him, or ſever'd from him, we can do nothing; and to ſuch as are out of him, God is as a conſuming fire: and what then will ſuch do in the day of viſitation, that have not as yet *fled to Chriſt for refuge*, and gotten into him? *If a man abide not in me, he's caſt forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned*, Joh. 15. 6.

2. As we are to meet God *in him*, united to him by faith; ſo *with him*: *i. e.* God being incens'd by our ſins, we are, when we go to meet God, to take him along with us, and preſent him, and make uſe of him, who is ſo dearly beloved, and with whom the Father is ſo well pleaſed, and in and through whom alone, he comes to be well pleas'd with us; and therefore in our addreſſes to God, we muſt be ſure not to paſs him by, God having made him, *to be for us, in things pertaining to him*, as the Scripture declares. *For every high prieſt taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, &c.* Heb. 5. 1. And *that he might be a merciful and faithful high-prieſt, in things pertaining to God*, or to be done with God, *chap.* 2. 17. And we have many things to be done with God, and things of very great concern, and O! what a mercy is it, that we have ſuch a one made, ordained, and appointed for us, as to whatever appertains, and is to be done

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with God; and among other, this is one main thing, The rendring us, in our addreſſes to him, acceptable: And being incens'd by our ſins, to get him appeas'd, and pacified; and now, Chriſt as to this, is made, and ordained by God for us; and therefore in our addreſſes to him, as ever we would find acceptance, and have him meet us in mercy, ſo as to find grace in his ſight, we muſt be ſure, as I ſaid, not to paſs him by, but take him along with us, and preſent him, tender him, and make uſe of him, and to beg of God to look upon us in, and thorow him. As *David*, *Pſ.* 14. 9, *Look upon the face of thine annointed*, *i. e.* of thy Chriſt, of thy Meſſiah, and let me for his ſake find acceptance. So *Dan.* 9. 17, *Cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy ſanctuary that is deſolate, for the Lords ſake.*

Thus if we would meet God ſo as to pacifie him, we muſt carry Chriſt as it were in our Arms, in the arms of our Faith, as old *Simeon* got him once into his bodily Arms; and then, *Lord*, ſays he, *now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace*, *Luk.* 2. 28, 29. And ſo we ſhall then meet ☞ God in peace; and this is a myſtery we ſhould more ſtudy, and get better acquainted with; how in our addreſſes to God, to make uſe of Chriſt. *I am, ſays Chriſt, the way*, &c. *and no man cometh to the father, but by me*, *John* 14. 6. Not with acceptance, neither ſo as to appeaſe, pleaſe, and pacifie him, but with me, and by me. In our addreſſes to God, he ſays, as it were to us, as *Joſeph* ſometimes ſaid to his Brethren, as in reference to their Brother *Benjamin*: He *did ſolemnly proteſt unto them, that except he was with them, they ſhould not ſee his face.* And therefore ſay they to their Father, *If thou wilt ſend our brother*

ther with us, we will go down; but if not, we will not go: For the man ſaid unto us, ye ſhall not ſee my face except your brother be with you, Gen. 43. 3, 4, 5. And therefore they took *Benjamin* with them. And *verſ.* 16, *When Joſeph ſaw Benjamin with them, he ſaid to the ruler of his houſe, bring thoſe men home, and ſlay, and make ready, for theſe men ſhall dine with me*, &c. I ſee they have brought *Benjamin* with them. So unleſs Jeſus Chriſt be with us in our addreſſes to God, our elder Brother, there's no ſeeing Gods face, no finding grace in his ſight, favour in his eyes; but if he be with us, then we ſhall have welcome.

We are bid, *What ever we do in word, or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus*: And how much more then ſo great a thing as this, to meet God in the way of his Judgments? And if we are to give thanks to God by him, much more by him are we to apply our ſelves, to appeaſe and pacifie him, being incens'd by our ſins. And therefore let us be ſure ſo to meet God, 1. As being *in Chriſt*, and then 2. *with Chriſt*, *i. e.* ſo as for acceptation, to preſent him, tender him, and plead, and preſs, and urge him, and his merits, mediation and ſatisfaction; and that is the way to meet God to purpoſe, and to prevail as to what we meet him for: He being the true ἱλαστήριον, mercy-ſeat, or propitiatory, through whom alone the Father is propitious and merciful to ſuch who ſo meet him. See *Exod.* 25. 17, 21, 22.

V. *With Preſents*, as *Jacob* met his incenſed Brother *Eſau*, and *Abigail David*, *Gen.* 32. 13, 20. 1 *Sam.* 25. 18. And here the main and principal Preſent is indeed what I have mentioned already,

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Jeſus Chriſt: but yet there are other alſo, which in and thorow him, are very pleaſing and delightful to God: As 1. *A broken and contrite heart*, an heart kindly toucht and affected with ſin, and afflicted for it: and which in a deep ſenſe of it, and ſorrow for it, heartily ſighs and longs for the pardon thereof. This is ſaid to be *The ſacrifices of God*, *Pſal.* 51. 17, to denote its ſingular acceptableneſs above all other: None ſo pleaſing as this, nor without this. —*But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word*, Iſa. 66. 2. *I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf*, &c. Jer. 31. 18. *i. e.* bewailing his ſins. And *Joſiah*'s heart being *tender*, and he *humbling himſelf before God*, *how pleaſing was it to God? Becauſe thy heart was tender, and thou didſt humble thy ſelf*, 2 *Chron.* 34. 27. And this is mentioned again, to ſhew how grateful it was. See *Pſal.* 34. 18. *Iſa.* 57. 15. *Matt.* 5. 3, 4, &c. Such ſeal to what the Scripture ſays of ſin, that it is no light or ſlight matter, but an evil and bitter thing, &c. But how few ſuch Preſents have we? We have many broken eſtates, and broken credits, but few broken hearts. Oh! that there were more.

2. *A willing and obedient heart*, ready in all things to comply with the mind and will of God, yielding up it ſelf to him. *Lord, what wilt thou have me do?* Act. 9. 6. And *ſpeak Lord, for thy ſervant heareth*; and *I am thy ſervant*, and *will do all that thou bidſt me*. This is very pleaſing—*Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than ſacrifice*, &c. 1 *Sam.* 15.

15. 22. In *Micah* 6, We have a People there asking the queſtion, *verſ.* 6, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the high God?* Wherewith ſhall I meet him, ſo as to appeaſe him? *Shall I come before him with burnt offerings? with Calves of a year old?* verſ. 7, *Will the Lord be pleas'd with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oyl,* &c? No, *Verſ.* 8, *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* *i. e.* to obey, and readily comply with him in the duties of both Tables, coucht in thoſe expreſſions: To be a willing people. *Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? Jer.* 30. 21, That hath ſuch an hearty deſire, and ready, and willing reſolution to comply with me? This is that which pleaſes God indeed. *But thoſe mine enemies, that would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me, Luk.* 19. 27.

3. *A ſincere and upright heart*, For the Lord *hath pleaſure in uprightneſs*, and the upright in heart are his delight, 1 *Chron.* 29. 17. *Prov.* 11. 20. *Thou deſireſt truth in the inward parts,* &c. *Pſal.* 51. 6.

4. *A merciful compaſſionate heart* towards others in their miſeries and neceſſities, ſo as to pity them, and to be ready to ſuccour and relieve them, *Heb.* 13. 16, *But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.* They are acceptable preſents, bowels of mercy, kindneſs. When we go to meet God, What do we go to meet him for, but that we may obtain mercy? And if we would obtain mercy, we muſt

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ſhew mercy: For *with the merciful, God will ſhew himſelf merciful*, Pſal. 18. 25. *And they ſhall obtain mercy*, Matt. 5. 7. *But he ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy*, *Jam.* 2. 13. When Gods judgments were denounc'd againſt *Nebuchadnezzar*, that yet there might be a lengthening of his tranquility, *Daniel* counſels him, *to break of his ſins by righteouſneſs, and his iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor*, Dan. 4. 27. And this is ſaid to be *the faſt God hath choſen*; *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out, to thy houſe*; *when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him*; *and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thy own fleſh? And then ſhall thy light break forth as the morning*, &c. *Then ſhalt thou call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer*; *thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay here I am*, &c. *Iſa.* 58. 6, 7, &c. Our ſhewing mercy to others, and therein imitating God in his own goodneſs and kindneſs, though it be not the cauſe, yet is it a comfortable pledg and evidence of our finding mercy with God our ſelves. *The Lord give mercy to the houſe of Oneſephorus, for he oft refreſhed me*, &c. 2 *Tim.* 1. 16. And the gratefulneſs of this to God, appears from the many, exceeding, great, and precious promiſes that are made unto it, ſee *Pſal.* 41. 1, 2, &c. 112. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Prov.* 11. 25. 19, 17, &c. And that of all other evidences of Faith, this is that eſpecially which Jeſus Chriſt will take cognizance of at the laſt day. *Come ye bleſſed*, &c. *for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat*, &c. *Matt.* 25. 34, 35, &c. And therefore the loſs of ſuch is very ſad, *That merciful men*, men of kindneſs *are taken away*, Iſa. 57. 1. *And the good man*

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is periſhed out of the earth, Micah. 7. 2. Such as for *whom*, *ſome would even dare to dye*, *Rom.* 5. 7.

VI. *By extraordinary faſting, afflicting, and humbling our ſelves before the Lord.* And this the Lord doth in a ſpecial manner, in ſuch a day call for, and invite unto. As in *Joel*, God was there in the way of his judgments: And *ſanctifie ye* (ſays he) *a faſt, call a ſolemn aſſembly, gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land, unto the houſe of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord: Alas! for the day, the day of the Lord is at hand*, &c. And ſo *Joel* 2. 15, *Blow the trumpet in Zion, ſanctifie a faſt, call a ſolemn aſſembly*, &c. And thus we find his people ſtill have done, when God hath been in the way of his judgments. See 1 *Sam.* 7. 5, 6. 2 *Chron.* 20. 3, &c. And thus the very *Ninevites* did; *They believed God, and proclaimed a faſt, and put on ſackcloth from the greateſt of them even to the leaſt of them. For word came unto the king of Niniveh, and he aroſe from his throne, and he laid his robe from him*, &c. *and cauſed it to be proclaimed and publiſhed thorow Nineveh* (by the Decree of the King and his Nobles) *Let neither man nor beaſt, herd nor flock, taſt any thing; let them not feed nor drink water*, &c. *Jonah* 3. 5, 6, 7, 8,—And O that the Lord would put it into the heart of *our king*, and into the hearts of our *Nobles*, to decree, and cauſe it to be proclaim'd, that in ſuch a way we might all meet the Lord, by faſting, afflicting, and humbling our ſelves before him: And certainly in ſuch a day, for people to be ſtill feaſting and making merry, what is it

but

but to walk quite contrary to God, and in a direct oppoſition to what he is doing, and calling for, which much provokes him, and which therefore he ſeverely threatens. *And in that day did the Lord of hoſts call to weeping*, &c. *Iſa.* 22. 13, 14. What day was this? You may ſee, *Iſa.* 22. 5, *A day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord God of Hoſts, in the valley of Viſion*, &c. And then did the Lord God of Hoſts, call to weeping, &c. But *behold, joy and gladneſs, ſlaying oxen, and killing ſheep; eating fleſh, and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall dye.* And Verſ. 14, *It was revealed in mine ears, by the Lord of Hoſts, ſurely this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till ye dye, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts.* And wo to them *that are at eaſe in Sion*, &c. *that put far away the evil day, that drink wine in bowls*, &c. *Amos* 1. 3, 6, &c.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The Reaſons why we are thus to meet God.

1. BEcauſe the great God commands it, as here, and ſo after elſewhere; yea, and dictates withal the way and manner thereof, as *Hoſ.* 14. 1, 2. *O Iſrael, return unto the Lord thy God: for thou haſt fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, ſay unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly.* And 2 Chron. 7. 14, The Lord there preſcribes the very platform thereof, If (ſays he) they *ſhall humble themſelves, and pray, and ſeek my face, and turn from their wicked ways*, &c. and *Iſa.* 27. 4, 5, *Fury is not in me: who would ſet the briars and thorns againſt me in battel, I would go through them, I would burn them together.* But he gives them better advice, *i. e. to make peace with him*, and directs them the way, *Or let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me.* And now God commanding us to do this, and directing us withall how to do it, ſurely this ſufficiently declares it to be our duty and concern both: And not to do it, What is it, but diſobedience to God, and a kind of ſlighting and deſpiſing of his Soveraignty and Authority?

2. He expects it—*In their affliction they will ſeek me early*, Hoſ. 5. 15. *And when thy judg-*

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ments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs, Iſa. 26. 9. However they neglected to do it before, he expects, and looks they ſhould do it then: And therefore is it then in a ſpecial manner their duty to do it.

3. Others formerly have done it: How often did *Moſes* thus meet the Lord, when incens'd againſt *Iſrael? He ſtood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, leſt he ſhould deſtroy them, Pſal.* 106. 23. Thus *Samuel* and all *Iſrael* met him, 1 *Sam.* 7. 5, 6. *Jehoſhaphat* and all *Judah*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 3. Ye the *Ninevites*, *Jonah* 3. 5, 6, 7. And it was not without ſucceſs: And ſurely what others have in ſuch a caſe done formerly, it is no leſs our duty and concern to do now.

4. Becauſe when God is in that way, our great work and buſineſs is, and lies with him; he being the great Agent, and Efficient in all judgments felt or feared, threatned or inflicted. *I* (ſays the Lord) *form the light, and create darkneſs; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all theſe things*, Iſa. 45. 7. And, *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the ſeas, and all deep places, Pſal.* 35. 6. And ſo he does ſtill, at home and abroad, by Sea and by Land: There is *a wheel in the middle of the wheels*, as *Ezekiel* ſaw, *Chap.* 1. 16, which as the Spring in a Watch, orders and ſets a going all the other; and according to the motion of that, (which is Gods ſecret, Divine Providence) ſo are all motions regulated and ordered, and all things are, and ſhall be as he will, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will, *Epheſ.* 1. 11. *Who is he that*

ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not? Lam. 3. 37.

And therefore our great work and buſineſs is (as I ſay) with him, more than with Men, with creatures, inſtruments. And therefore it is our great duty and concern, to have recourſe to him, to ſay, as the people of God of old, *Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath ſmitten, and he will bind us up,* Hoſ. 6. 1. *And let us lift up our hearts, with our hands, unto God in the Heavens,* Lam. 3. 41. *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee,* &c. Iſa. 26. 16. Thus when *Abſoloms* ſervants had ſet *Joabs* Barley on fire, he goes not to the ſervants, but to *Abſolom*; ſo *Abigail* haſtens to *David*, *Benhadad*'s ſervants to the King of *Iſrael*, they of *Tire and Sidon* to *Herod*, and ſo ſhould we to God. —*Prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael*; as *Eliphaz* counſel'd, *Job* 5. 8, *I would ſeek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cauſe:* And indeed we cannot do better. Whither ſhould we go elſe? Thus *Moſes*, when *Iſrael* by their ſin had incens'd the Lord, *Now, ſays he, I will go up unto the Lord, Exod.* 32. 30. And it is beſt for us all to do ſo. And hither we call and invite you, as the Prophets of old, *They called them to the moſt high, Hoſ.* 11. 7. So do we: And when we have but once overcome him, appeas'd him, and gotten him our friend, our work is done: When he is at peace, all's at peace. *When he giveth quietneſs, who then can make trouble?* &c. Job 34. 29. *Then* (ſays *Eliphaz*) *ſhalt thou be in league with the ſtones of the field: and the beaſt of the field ſhall be at peace with thee,* Job 5. 23. *Tranquillus Deus tranquillat*

quillat omnia, If God be for us, who can be againſt us? Rom. 8. 31.

5. Becauſe *when God is in ſuch a way, he is wroth*; and ſurely when he is ſo, it is our great duty and concern to labour all we can to appeaſe him, as *Moſes* ſtill did. *And Moſes beſought the Lord his God, and ſaid, Lord why does thy wrath wax hot againſt thy people,* &c. *Exod.* 32. 11, 12, 13. And how earneſt is he, and how many arguments doth he make uſe of for the appeaſing of it? *Shall a Trumpet be blown in the City, and the people not be afraid,* &c? *The Lion hath roared, who will not fear?* Amos 3. 6, 8. *i.e.* God hath made known his anger, and his anger is *formidable and dreadful*, as the Scripture every where ſets it forth. *For we are conſumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. And who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath, Pſal.* 90. 7, 11. How dreadfully does the Prophet *Nahum* ſet it forth? *Nahum* 1. 6, *Who can ſtand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceneſs of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. And when he hideth his face, who then can behold him, whether it be done againſt a nation or a man only?* Job 34. 29.—*And ye periſh from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little,* Pſal. 2. 12. *The kings wrath,* ſays *Solomon, is as the roaring of a Lyon, and as meſſengers of death: but a wiſe man will pacifie it,* Prov. 19. 12, 16, 14. What is the wrath then of the great God? And will it not be our wiſdom to pacifie it? *Scornful men bring a City into a ſnare, but wiſe men turn away wrath, Prov.* 29. 8. We find *Act.* 12. 20, that *Herod*

was highly diſpleas'd with them of Tire and Sidon, or bore an Hoſtil mind towards them, and intended War againſt them; and what did they? It is ſaid, *but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blaſtus the kings chamberlain their friend, deſired peace, becauſe their country was nouriſhed by the kings country.* They could not abide his diſpleaſure, neither could they ſubſiſt without peace had with him. And the great God being highly diſpleas'd with us, ſhall not we much more with one accord, having made Jeſus our friend, deſire Peace. For is not his diſpleaſure far more dreadful and formidable than *Herods*? And is not our Country nouriſhed by his, our Country here below, by that better and heavenly Country above? *And can a man receive any thing, unleſs it be given him from Heaven? Joh.* 3. 27. Are we not continually ſuſtain'd by him? And can we poſſibly ſubſiſt a moment without him? And we by our ſins having incens'd his wrath, ſurely there's all the reaſon we ſhould ſeek to appeaſe it. Shall we not labour to quench the fire which our ſelves have kindled? And to allay the ſtorms which we our ſelves have rais'd, &c?

6. *Becauſe unleſs we meet him*, he will certainly go on to do as he hath threatned. As *David* told *Abigail*, That unleſs *ſhe had haſted to come to meet him*, he had done as he had ſaid, 1 *Sam.* 25. 39. And ſo will God, as he did to *Jeruſalem*, *And I ſought for a man among them, that ſhould make up the hedg, and ſtand in the gap before me for the land, but I found none.* And what then? It follows, *Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them; I have conſumed them with the fire*

fire of my wrath, &c. I have executed what I threatned, *Ezek.* 22. 30, 31. And that is very obſervable to this purpoſe, *Zach.* 1. 5, 6, *Your fathers*, ſays the Lord, *where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?* No, they were dead, and gone, *but my words, did they not take hold of them?* did they dye with them? No, not turning to the Lord, they took hold of them, *And they returned, and ſaid, like as the Lord of hoſts thought to do unto us according to our ways and doings; ſo hath he dealt with us*; So *Lam.* 2. 17. And it being thus, the Lord wonders that there ſhould be no interceſſor: As if ſome formidable enemy was coming againſt a Place, whom there was no oppoſing by force, but good probability of appeaſing by an humble addreſs; would it not be matter of wonder if none ſhould do this! one would think all ſhould do it, when elſe inevitable ruine muſt enſue. And did people but believe this, and ſeriouſly weigh and conſider this, it would be a ſpecial means to put them upon this great duty. As the people of *Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a faſt*, &c. *Jonah* 3. 5. But the not believing nor conſidering of this, makes ſinners careleſs aud heedleſs, and ſo to expoſe themſelves and the Nation to inevitable ruine.

CHAP. V.

The Application of the point: and 1. *By way of Reprehenſion.*

WHen God is in the way of his judgments, is it his peoples great duty and concern to meet him? Then here's matter of juſt reproof to Two ſorts of People:

1. To ſuch who are ſo far from meeting God, in the way of his Judgments, that they ſcarce ever ſo much as mind or regard him; but let him do what he will, they care not; they mind the World, and their intereſts and concerns there on the Earth, but never regard what heaven doth. As the *Duke of Alva* once told the *King of France*, when he had asked him, whether he had obſerv'd the late great Eclipſe, in the Heavens? No, ſaid he, I have too much to do on Earth, to mind the Heavens. And how many ſuch are there, who *Gallia* like, *care for none of thoſe things*? They are ſo far from meeting God, ſo as to ſtay his hand, that they will not ſo much as ſee, or once take notice of his hand. As the Lord complains of thoſe, *Iſa.* 26. 11, *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee*, &c. And of *Ephraim*, *Strangers have devoured his ſtrength, and he knoweth it not*; yea, *gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not*, *Hoſ.* 7. 9. That is, he hath no ſenſe of it, neither does he mind or regard it, or lay it

it to heart. And how many ſuch ſottiſh, ſenſeleſs, ſtupid ſouls are there among us, who *regard not the works of the Lord, nor conſider the operation of his hands, but are ſetled on their lees, and ſecure, and put far away the evil day*? But *wo* (ſays the Lord) *to them that are at eaſe in Sion, that put far away the evil day*, Amos 6. 1, 3. And *becauſe they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he ſhall deſtroy them, and not build them up*, *Pſal.* 28. 5. See *Iſa.* 5. 11, 12.

2. To thoſe who inſtead of meeting God in the way of his judgments, ſo as to appeaſe him; do rather by going on ſtill in their ſins, more and more provoke him: and inſtead of endeavouring to quench the fire themſelves have kindled, do rather add more fuel to it. Who ſay in effect as thoſe *Jer.* 18. 12, *There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. And come ye, ſay they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill our ſelves with ſtrong drink, and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant*, Iſa. 56. 12. *And let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall dye*, Iſa. 22. 13. Thus they ſpake in a ſcoffing way. The Prophet tells us we have not long to live, we ſhall ſoon be ſlain; and therefore let us be jovial while we may. O! the daring-impudence of ſinners! *Solomon* ſays, *The wrath of a king is as meſſengers of death, but a wiſe man will pacifie it.* What Fools and Bedlams are thoſe then, who ſtill more and more provoke the wrath of the great God, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who cuts off the ſpirit of Princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth?* Pſal. 76. 12. And yet how ma-

ny ſuch are there, who having troden down the hedg, and opened the gap, are ſo far from making it up again, that they more and more widen it? And inſtead of endeavouring to put a ſtop to Gods judgments, do rather more haſten them? And how juſtly are ſuch to be reprov'd as enemies, not only to themſelves, and to their own ſouls; but to the Nation, to Church and State, to King and Kingdom? For theſe take the ready way to undo all. As *Samuel* told *Iſrael*, *But if ye ſhall ſtill do wickedly, ye ſhall be conſumed, both ye and your King*, 1 Sam. 12. 15.

II. By way of Exhortation. When God is in the way of his Judgments, is it his peoples great duty and concern to meet him; as hath abundantly been made good? Then God being, and ſtill continuing and going on in that way, let us all in the name and fear of God, ſet our ſelves to that, which is ſo much *our duty and concern*, as indeed there is nothing more; I mean *to meet him in the way of his Judgments*: and let us meet him aright; and as we have had it made out unto us, and ſet before us, *with preparation*, by *prayers and ſupplications*, and thoſe aright qualifi'd; by *true repentance and converſion*; in, *and with a Mediator*, even that *One, and only Mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus*, whom God hath *made for us, in things pertaining to him*, or to be done with him. *With Preſents*; ſuch as in, and through Chriſt the chief Preſent of all, are pleaſing to God: as of *a broken and contrite heart*: a *willing and obedient heart*: a *ſincere and upright heart*: a *merciful and compaſſionate heart towards others in their miſeries*

and

and neceſſities: For we go to God for mercy for our ſelves, and the Nation; and we ſhould then ſhew mercy to others. And laſtly, *by extraordinary Faſting, Afflicting, and Humbling our ſelves before the Lord:* And thus let us anſwer the Lords call here in the Text—And *becauſe I will do this prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael.* And ſurely after all the Judgments which the great God hath inflicted on us, he hath as great cauſe to complain of *Englands* incorrigibleneſs, as here of *Iſrael's*, *Yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord:* and therefore may juſtly reſolve, as here concerning *Iſrael*, *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O England.* Truly what the Lord will do, I know not, neither am I able to ſay: what he hath done a-late, we ſee he hath broken out againſt us again, by ſeveral Fires, and dreadful Flames, not only in the City, but in ſeveral places in the Country: He hath called Home ſeveral of his Ambaſſadors a-late, taken away ſeveral of his Miniſters (two in one day), and others of his choice Servants, and that very ſuddenly; ſuch as ſhould *make up the hedg, and ſtand in the gap before the Lord for the Land, that he may not deſtroy it*: which though little conſidered and laid to heart, bodes very ill; and is one of thoſe gray-hairs which are here and there upon us: we may fear it is even night when the Lord gets his Children ſo faſt to bed; and that the ſtorm is very near, when he gathers and houſes ſo faſt his corn: our Fathers, the Chariots of our *Iſrael* and the *Horſe-men thereof*, go off a-pace, and we ſhall ſee them no more here, 2 *Kings* 2. 9. This now, and a great deal

deal more the Lord hath done a-late; but what he's yet about farther to do, who can tell? But we have great cauſe to fear he may do worſe, and deal ſeverelier with us, than ever yet he hath done: For *we turn not* (as leaſt very few of us) *to him that hath ſo often ſmitten us*; neither, as we ought, *do we ſeek the Lord of Hoſts*: And therefore how juſtly might he bring final ruin upon us: and *cut off head and tayl, branch and ruſh, in one day*, as he threatens, *Iſa.* 9. 12, 13, 14. And therefore, that if poſſible we may yet prevent this, let us do as we are here admoniſhed, meet God, ſo as to appeaſe and pacify him, and make up the breach, and take up the controverſy between him and us; that ſo God may be aton'd, and reconciliation made. The Lord ſends his Judgments as his troops againſt us, and there's no fighting, or frighting them away; but our way is to Pray them away, to Repent them away, to Faſt them away; there's no raiſing the Siege by oppoſition, but by humble ſubmiſſion; no raiſing it by force, but by an humble falling down at his feet: to which let us all addreſs our ſelves.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

And now in the farther proſecution of this Uſe, I ſhall only do theſe Two things, 1. Propound ſome Directions for the better managing of what we do: and then, 2. Some Motives, the more to prevail with us to do it.

Direct. 1. *LET us do what we do Joyntly:* Unite our forces together, and beſiege, as it were, the Throne of Grace: *Gather your ſelves together*, yea, *gather together O Nation not deſir'd*, Zeph. 2. 1: as it is ſaid of thoſe of *Tyre and Sidon*, that *Herod being highly diſpleaſed with them, they came with one accord to him*, Acts 12. 20, ſo let us to God, it being every ones concern; and that which tends to the weal of all: and the more here, the better; and likelier to prevail. And thus we find the people of God have done formerly: It is ſaid of *Judah*, that *they gathered themſelves together:* and *out of all the Cities of Judah they came to ſeek the Lord. And all Judah ſtood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives and their children*, &c. 2 *Chron.* 20. 4, 13, and Ezra 10. 9, *Then all the men of Judah, and Benjamin gathered themſelves together*, &c. We have all one way or other help'd to kindle Gods wrath; and we ſhould all therefore joyn together in labouring to quench it: We have all help'd to break down the hedg, and we ſhould all

all help to make it up; we have all help'd to open the gap, and we ſhould all ſtand in it. And this the Lord calls for: *Joel* 2. 14, *Call a ſolemn aſſembly, gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the land into the houſe of the Lord*, &c. So Chap. 2. 15, *Blow the trumpet in Sion, ſanctifie a Faſt, and call a ſolemn aſſembly*: ver. 16, *Gather the people, aſſemble the Elders, gather the children, and thoſe that ſuck the breaſt.* This was the more to affect the parents, and ſtir them up to Repentance: thoſe poor infants being like to ſuffer no ſmall ſhare in that common Calamity, cauſed by the ſins of their Parents, &c. *Shall a trumpet be blown in the City, and the people not be afraid*; or, as it is in the Margent, *run together? Come and let us return unto the Lord*, elſe all are like to ſhare in the Judgment: See *Iſa.* 24. 1, 2—9. 14, &c.

Direct. 2. *Speedily, without farther delaies.* For the matter is of too great moment and importance to admit thereof: there's no demurring in ſuch caſes. *Gather your ſelves together*, &c. *before the decree bring forth, before the day paſs as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you*, &c. Zeph. 2. 1, 2. Thus when *Abigail* went to meet *David*, it is ſaid, *She made haſte, and except* (ſays he) *thou hadſt haſted*, &c. 1 Sam. 25. 18, 34. And thus he that *with ten thouſand, went to meet him that came againſt him with twenty thouſand, while the other was yet a great way off, he ſends an Ambaſſage, and deſireth conditions of peace*, Luke 14. 31, 32. And when *wrath was gone out from the Lord againſt Iſrael*, it was *Moſes* his counſel to *Aaron, to go quickly to the congregation, and make attonement*

ment for them: and it is ſaid, *he ran:* neceſſary things fall not under deliberation, but require preſent expedition: and this the Lord ſtill puts us upon, as to this great work, That we do, what we do, now, quickly: *Therefore alſo* now, *ſays the Lord, Turn ye even to me,* &c. Joel 2. 12. *And return ye* now *every one from his evil way,* &c. Jer. 18. 11. To day, *if ye will hear his voice—Agree with thine adverſary* quickly, *whiles thou art in the way with him,* Mat. 5. 25. *Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is neer,* Iſa. 55. 6. And *give glory to the Lord your God, before he cauſe darkneſs,* &c. Jer. 13. 16—And *if ye will enquire, enquire ye, i. e.* ſpeedily, there is danger in delaies. *Boaſt not thy ſelf of to morrow, for thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth,* Prov. 27. 1. And therefore when the Lord gives us ſigns and alarms of war, we are to haſten to meet him, and make our peace with him, leſt putting it off, it prove too late. Our Repentance muſt not only be true and thorough, but ſpeedy and timely: ſay we then as thoſe: *Zeph.* 8. 21, *Let us go ſpeedily to pray before the Lord, and to ſeek the Lord of Hoſts: I will go alſo.* It is too late to think of a treaty, or to call for a parley, when the battel is joyn'd, and Drums are beating, and Trumpets ſounding: So when Judgments are actually come upon us, and have taken hold of us: Or if we yet ſhould have peace, we may ſmart ſoundly, and pay dearly, before we have it: and therefore do we ſpeedily, what we do.

Direct. 3. *Very humbly, and ſelf-abaſingly.* For God loves to ſee the creature ſtoop and lye

lye low before him: *He putteth his mouth in the duſt, if ſo be there may be hope*, Lam. 3. 29. And therefore in our addreſſes to God, being incens'd by our ſins, we ſhould go clothed *with humility:* that ſhould be the wear and garb we meet him in; our frame ſhould be ſuch as *Abraham*'s of old, when he made interceſſion for *Sodom*: *Behold now, I have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the Lord, who am but duſt and aſhes*, Gen. 18. 27. As *Jacobs, I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou haſt ſhewed to thy ſervant*, &c. Gen. 32. 10. As *Jobs, Behold I am vile,—and I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes*, Job 40. 4. and 42. 6. As *Daniels, And I ſet my face unto the Lord God, to ſeek by prayer and ſupplication, with faſting, and ſackcloth, and aſhes*, Dan. 9. 3. Thus we ſhould meet the Lord, as I hinted before, as *Jacob* met his incenſed Brother *Eſau: He bowed himſelf ſeven times to the ground.* As *Abigail David, She fell before him on her face, and bowed her ſelf to the ground, and fell at his feet.* As *Benhadads* Servants the King of *Iſrael, with ſackcloth on their loyns, and roaps on their heads.* As the *Prodigal* his Father—*and am no more worthy to be called thy Son, make me as one of thy hired ſervants.* And God being angry, and in the way of his Judgments, this is a poſture very ſutable and acceptable to God, that when he is humbling us, we ſhould be humble; and that when he is laying us low, we ſhould be lowly. *If my people which are called by my name, ſhall humble themſelves*, &c. 2 Chron. 7. 14 *And if their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they accept of the puniſh-*

puniſhment of their iniquity, &c. Lam. 26. 4. *He reſiſteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. And *Lord, thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble*, Pſal. 10. 17. And, *he ſhall ſave the humble perſon*, Job 22. 29. So that it is both our duty and ſecurity to humble our ſelves, eſpecially when God is humbling us. *Ahab* doing this, though but Hopocritically, yet the Lord reſpited the evil in his days, 1 *Kings* 21. 29. *Seeſt thou, ſays the Lord to Elijah, how Ahab humbleth himſelf before me?* (this was but in outward appearance) *becauſe he humbles himſelf before me, I will not bring the evil in his days*, &c. But how acceptable then is the hearty humiliatinn of a true penitent? And according to what appears of this, it bodes good or ill to a Nation. When the Lord had manifeſted his diſpleaſure againſt that people, *Exod.* 33. 5: It is very obſervable what the Lord there ſays to them, *Put off, ſays he, thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.* But does not God know what to do to a people, and what he will do with them? Yes, but his diſpleaſure appearing againſt this people, he ſpeaks as one unreſolv'd, either for ſparing, or deſtroying: and as willing to be determin'd, as he found their poſture and demeanour to be: As if he had ſaid, If thou do indeed humble thy ſelf, and repent, I will ſhew thee mercy; but if thou ſtill perſiſt in thy pride, and impenitency, I will execute my Judgments upon thee: So that by what a people are, as to this, they may gueſs and conclude how it is like to be with them, and what God will do to them: and if ſo, how ſad may we judg it is like to be with

with *England*, with *London* ! For do we put off our ornaments, lay down our pride ? nothing leſs: for was there ever more ? does it not teſtifie to our faces? is it not viſible and apparent? And that even now, when God goes on ſtill to teſtifie his diſpleaſure againſt us, as he hath ſeverely a-late; verily we ſo carry it, as if we would not be humbled, though God humble us; nor lye low, though he lay us low: and the Lord forgive it to us Miniſters, that we do no more reprove it in our Aſſemblies, which ſome ſadly reſent: trading indeed is low, and mens eſtates low, but we carry it as high, or higher than ever : God ſays to us, as to *Pharoah*, *How long wilt thou refuſe to humble thy ſelf before me?* Exod. 10. 3. I have laid your health low, your ſtrength low, many of your lives low, your City low, your houſes low, your eſtates low, your trading low: O! when ſhall your hearts be humbled and laid low ? certainly if we do not humble our ſelves and lye low, God will yet lay us lower.

Direct. 4. Doing what we do very humbly, *Let it be yet Hopefully; Self-abaſingly, but not diſparingly*: As *Shechaniah* ſaid to *Ezra*, *We have treſpaſſed againſt our God*, &c. *yet now there is hope in Iſrael concerning this thing*, Ezra 10. 2. *And who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?* &c. Jonah 3. 9. And the Lord does here in the very words themſelves ſo expreſs himſelf, as yet to incourage his people. For 1*ſt*, he names *Iſrael* twice here, *O Iſrael*, and again, *O Iſrael*; as a name that had been, and ſtill was very dear to him; as *David*, becauſe *Abſalom* was dear to him, he names

names his name thrice: *O my ſon Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon Abſalom*, &c. 2 Sam. 18 33. 2*dly*, He ſays, *Thy God* to ſhew the Covenant ſtill continued firm, if they did but repent, and all to keep up hope, and that his people might *catch* thereat; as it is ſaid the ſervants of *Benhadad did diligently obſerve whether any thing would come from the King of Iſrael, and did haſtily catch it*, 1 Kings 20. 33. Oh *our iniquities are indeed* great, exceeding great; and *are increaſed over our heads, and our treſpaſſes are grown up unto the heavens*, Ezra 9. 6. But Gods mercy is great, not only to the heavens, but above the heavens; and many and great both, are his tender mercies: *And as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are his ways and thoughts higher than ours*, Pſal. 108. 4. *And he delighteth in mercy*. It was part of the Lords Name which he proclaimed before *Moſes, The Lord God, gracious and merciful, abundant in goodneſs, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion and ſin*, &c. Exod. 34. 6, 7. And, *Let Iſrael hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption: And he ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his iniquities*, Pſal. 130. 7, 8. And the Lord likes well of this, that his people humbling and abaſing themſelves, ſhould yet *hope in his merey*, and not deſpair; the Lords eye is ſaid to be upon them that fear him, and withal, hope in his mercy; yea, he is ſaid to take pleaſure in ſuch, *Pſal.* 33. 18. and 147. 11. Expecting all from it, and encouraging themſelves in it; which is ſo great, and withal ſo free.

Direct. 5. *Perſeveringly, unweariedly*, reſolving to perſiſt in our ſuits, till we prevail, as the Saints of old:

I will not, ſays Jacob, let thee go except thou bleſs me, Gen. 32. 26. The Lord bids *Moſes, Let him alone*, and offers him fair, that he would *make of him a great nation*, Exod. 32. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. But that would not take him off, but he ſtill beſought the Lord his God, and prevailed: we ſhould reſolve as the Prophet, *Iſaiah* 62. 1, *For Sions ſake I will not hold my peace, and for Jeruſalems ſake I will not reſt, until the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs, and the ſalvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.* And ver. 6, 7, *I have ſet watchmen upon thy walls, O Jeruſalem, which ſhall never hold their peace day nor night: And ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence: And give him no reſt till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth.* As it is ſaid of the *Macedonians*, that *Alexander* being diſpleas'd with them, they not only laid by their Arms, and put on mourning apparel, and came running in troops to his Tent, but there continued for near three days together, beſeeching his pardon, till they obtain'd it. And *God forbid that we ſhould ſin againſt the Lord, in ceaſing ſtill to pray* for *England*, for *London*, &c. but ſtrive together in our prayers ſtill for them, with all perſeverance: and this the Lord is well pleaſed with; we never give him more reſt, than when in this ſenſe we give him leaſt: when we ſtill pray, and do not *faint*, but follow on with our prayers till we prevail.

Direct. 6. and laſt, That we may *Effectually* do what we do, and make peace, *Let us take hold of the Lords ſtrength*, as himſelf adviſes us, *Iſa.* 27. 5, which I hinted before, but now ſhall

ſhall open and explain: *or let him take hold of my ſtrength, i. e.* (as ſome) of my ſelf, who is called the ſtrength of *Iſrael*, 1 Sam. 15. 29, and in this ſenſe it ſuits with that of, *Iſa.* 64. 7, *And there is none that calls upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee, i. e.* either to keep thee back from going on ſtill in thy Judiciary proceedings, or to keep thee, that thou doſt not depart from us. And thus we ſhould in an humble ſubmiſſive way take hold as it were of the Lord, or his arm, that he does not ſtill go on to ſmite, or that he do not depart: for *wo to us if he depart from us*; it is the very ſum and completion of mans miſery, for God to depart as to his ſpecial and gracious preſence.

Or 2*dly*, *Of my ſtrength, i. e. of my grace, and the help and aſſiſtance of my Spirit*; as his ſtrength and ſufficiency, to this great work, without which he cannot as in reference thereunto do any thing: and taking ſtrength in this ſenſe, then we may be ſaid to take hold of it, when we humbly and earneſtly beg, and intreat it; and as our ſufficiency, hold to it, and rely on it; to fit and qualifie us to make peace with God, by working in us Faith and Repentance.

To oppoſe the *ſtrength* of God, is indeed dangerous; but thus in an humble way, by Prayer and Faith to lay hold on the Lords ſtrength, as our ſtrength, ſo as to make peace with him, it is both our duty and advantage, and it may be read, *or let him take hold, in, or with my ſtrength, i. e.* my help and aſſiſtance: Some read it, *let him be ſtrong in my ſtrength*: and we cannot indeed be ſtrong, but *in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Eph. 6. 10.

Or 3*dly*, *By the Lords ſtrength*, We may underſtand, *the Lords Chriſt*, and the riches of his Grace and Mercy, in and through him, who is called, as *the Wiſdom*, ſo alſo *the Power, or Strength of God*, 2 Cor. 21. 24. The Lords ſtrength to pardon, and ſave ſinners, lies in his mercy and grace, and that grace and mercy is in and through his Son, and in and through his Merits, Mediation, Satisfaction and Interceſſion; by which he is impowered and ſtrengthned thereto, without any impair of his Juſtice. And therefore that we may make peace with God, we muſt in this ſenſe *take hold of his ſtrength*, *i. e.* of his Chriſt, and of his grace and mercy in and through him: and this we take hold of by believing: and when upon any breach made between God and us, we apply our ſelves to God in and through him, and plead and urge him, (as I hinted before) and his Merits, Mediation, Satisfaction and Interceſſion, and wholly, and only ground our hopes thereon: And O! what goodneſs, and condeſcention is this in the great God, that whereas he might trample upon ſinners, he ſhould thus treat them, and beſpeak them, and adviſe them, *or let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me*! &c. Let heaven and earth, Angels and men, admire and adore this goodneſs, and wonderful condeſcention of the great God! and how ſhall we eſcape, if we refuſe to hearken to him, thus graciouſly and condeſcendingly adviſing us what to do, as to that wherein we are ſo infinitely concern'd!

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Motives.

Motive 1. THE relation we ſtand in to God, And this God himſelf here urges, —*Prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael*: He is thy God; and it is as if God had ſaid, I have not as yet utterly rejected thee, nor caſt thee off; neither is my Covenant with thee quite diſannul'd and made void, though thou haſt ſadly Apoſtatiz'd from me: and therefore being yet *thy God*, let this prevail with thee to meet me; for ſhould not *Iſrael* meet his God? and being angry, make his peace with him, and be aſhamed to continue any longer incorrigible under his hand? The *Prodigal* Son, as ſoon as ever he came to himſelf, reſolves, *I will ariſe and go to my Father*, Luk. 15. 17, 18. It is my Father, and ſhould not children go to their Father? a people to their God? and this Argument the Lord often makes uſe of elſewhere: *O Iſrael, return unto the Lord thy God*, &c. *Hoſea* 14. 1, *And, return ye backſliding children*, Jer. 3. 22, 23. And ſhall not our hearts eccho back again, as theirs did, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is ſalvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the ſalvation of Iſrael.* And what indeed more beſeems a people, than to meet their God, and being angry, to ſeek to

appeaſe him, eſpecially others going on ſtill by their ſins more and more to provoke him? and that they at leaſt ſhould labour to quench his wrath, and ſave the Nation, whiles others go on more and more to incenſe it, and deſtroy the Nation?

Mot. 2. *The conſideration of Gods infinite Power, Might, Majeſty and Greatneſs*: Which are here in ſeveral clear and perſpicuous demonſtrations, moſt notably and magnificently deſcribed and ſet forth, and with a great deal of State and Solemnity diſplai'd; and all the more to affect and move our dull and ſtupid ſpirits: and indeed it is one of the Statelieſt and moſt Magnificent Deſcriptions of God, that we find in all Holy Writ: *For lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought: that maketh the morning darkneſs, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth: the Lord, the God of Hoſts is his Name.* And it is as if the Lord had ſaid, And if my Mercy cannot move thee, let at leaſt my Majeſty; if not my Goodneſs, my infinite Power and Greatneſs, who am he *that formeth the mountains*, &c.

And now theſe glorious Titles and Attributes which the Lord here Aſſumes to himſelf, being here on purpoſe brought in, the more to put us upon this great work, that they may the more awaken us, and influence us to ſo good a work, I ſhall a little open and explain each of them in order as they lye: and this is all I ſhall do at preſent, in reference to this 13 *ver.*

1. *He formeth the mountains*: Thoſe huge, high and

and maſſy bodies; indeed he forms all things, the meaneſt, *Jer.* 10. 16, and the mountains alſo; yea, he is ſaid, *To weigh the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance*, Iſa. 40. 12, *i. e.* he can turn them which way he will, or overturn them as eaſily as we do the ſmalleſt matters which we weigh in ſcales, and put in, or take out of the balance as we pleaſe: *O quam magna & tremenda vertus Dei*! O how great and tremendous is the power of God!

2. *He createth the wind*, That ſtrong and boiſterous creature, and which though inviſible, and not conſpicuous as the mountains are, has, and does do ſuch ſtrange executions both by Sea and Land, breaking the Rocks, tearing the mountains, forcing up Trees by the roots, and toſſing the mightieſt Ships as a Tennis-ball: and this God creates, brings out of his Treaſuries, raiſes, ſtills, quiets, and orders as he pleaſes, *Pſal.* 135. 7, and 107. 25. Some render it *the ſpirit or ſoul*, which he alone in a ſpecial manner forms, and has command and power over, as well as over the body, *—and formeth the ſpirit of man within him*, *Zach.* 12. 1. And hence he is ſaid to be in a ſpecial manner *the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh*, Num. 16. 22. And the *Father of ſpirits*, Heb. 12. 9.

3. *He declares unto man what is his thought:* 1*ſt*, He knows what is his thought, what is in man; and needs not that any ſhould teſtifie of him: *He ſearcheth the heart, and trieth the reins*, Jer. 17. 10. And *all things are naked and open to him*, Heb. 4. 13. 2*dly*, He *declares to man*, namely, by his word, and by awakening his Conſcience, what is his thought. *The fool hath ſaid in his*

heart, there is no God, &c. Pſal. 14. 1. *Their inward thought is that their houſes ſhall continue for ever*, &c. The world lies neareſt their hearts,—*Thou thoughteſt I was altogether ſuch a one as thy ſelf*, &c. Pſal. 50. 21. *And with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goes after their covetouſneſs*, Ezek. 33. 31. Thus the Lord *declares to man his thought*: He *diſcovereth deep things out of darkneſs, and bringeth out to light the ſhadow of death*, Job 12. 22. And therefore there's no hiding any thing from him: Some refer this to God, —what is his *own* thought; he by his Spirit makes known to man *his* mind.

4. *He maketh the morning darkneſs, i. e.* ſay ſome, the night to ſucceed the day, and darkneſs the light; and hence *the day and night* are ſaid *to be his*, *Pſal.* 74. 16. *Naturæ ordinem gubernat & diſtincte vices temporum inter ſe diſtribuit*, He governs the order of nature, and diſtinctions of times, &c. or he makes the brighteſt morning, all on a ſudden darkneſs, by covering the Heavens with Clouds, and drawing them as a Curtain or Canopy between us and the light: Thus *he cloaths the heavens with blackneſs, and makes ſackcloth their covering*, *Iſa.* 50. 3. Or we may underſtand this in a figurative metaphorical ſenſe, *He maketh the morning darkneſs, i. e.* the comfort thereof, diſconſolateneſs; turns its joy into ſorrow, its mirth into mourning; as he threatneth, *Amos* 8. 9, &c. That he would *cauſe the ſun to go down at noon, and darken the earth in the clear day; that he would turn their feaſts into mourning, and their ſongs to lamentation*, &c. Thus he overthrew *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *he made the morning*

dark-

darkneſs: They had a lightſom morning, *The ſun*, it is ſaid, *roſe upon the earth*, *Gen.* 19. 23. But what diſmal darkneſs did the Lord ſoon make that morning? And how often, and how many of our mornings has the Lord thus in this ſenſe made darkneſs? What darkneſs in a ſpiritual ſenſe, did he make our morning, when *the ſun went down over ſo many Prophets* at once, and the *day* became *dark over them?* And for God, ſo to make the morning darkneſs, is exceeding ſad indeed! So in time of the Plague; How did the Lord then make *mornings darkneſs*, many having their dear Relations well, it may be, over night, but dead in the morning? Yea, what by reaſon of continual fears, frights, mournful ſounds and ſights, how was every morning then (as it were) *made darkneſs*, and afforded matter of mourning? So when that dreadful Fire brake forth, *Sept.* 2.——66. What darkneſs did the Lord make that morning, and ſeveral other after? Light they were indeed, in regard of Fire and Flames; but dark in regard of trouble and diſtreſs; a morning never to be forgotten: And ſo a-late in *Southwark*, and *Warwick-lane*, &c. And *it is of the Lords mercies, and becauſe his compaſſions fail not*, that every morning is not made darkneſs. And therefore let none preſume, nor be ſecure, as to their mornings, for God can ſoon make them darkneſs, though never ſo light and bright at preſent. *I was at eaſe*, ſays *Job*, *but he hath broken me aſunder*, &c. *Job* 16. 12. And *David*, *In my proſperity I ſaid, I ſhall never be moved; but thou didſt hide thy face and I was troubled*, Pſal. 30. 67. *The watchman ſaid, the morning cometh, and alſo the night*, Iſa.

21.

21. 12. And *give glory to the Lord your God, before he cauſe darkneſs, and before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the ſhadow of death, and make it groſs darkneſs*, Jer. 13. 16. *Jonah was exceeding glad of the Gourd, but a worm when the morning roſe, ſmote the Gourd and it withered*, Jonah 4. 67. Some read the words, *he maketh the morning, and darkneſs, i. e.* proſperity and adverſity, according to that, *Iſa.* 45. 7, *I form the light and create darkneſs: I make peace, and create evil*, &c. Hence, ſays *Solomon*, *In the day of proſperity be joyful, but in the day of adverſity conſider*, *Eccleſ.* 7. 14. What ſhould we conſider? That both are of God: for it follows, *God alſo hath ſet the one over againſt the other*; and ſo ſhould we, both being from him, and therefore we ſhould take both well, and bear the latter patiently, as well as entertain the other comfortably; eſpecially, we deſerving more than all the evil we ſuffer, but never deſerving the leaſt of the good we receive.

5. *He treadeth upon the high places of the earth, i. e.* Thoſe high places and precipices of the earth that are ſo far above our heads, are under his feet; he treads upon them, as being himſelf moſt high, exalted far above all: Or as ſome read it, *He treads down the heights of the earth.* 1. *The higheſt places of the earth:* The higheſt and ſtrongeſt Edifices, Caſtles, Towers, Steeples, as in this City. He *brought down them that dwelt on high, the lofty City he laid it low, he laid it low even to the ground*; even the higheſt and moſt towring places thereof: So *Garnſey* Caſtle, &c. *The very rocks are thrown down by him*, Nahum 1. 6. 2. *He treads down the high-*

higheſt powers, rules, and dominions of the earth with all their ſplendour, grandeur and glory. *Dominion and fear are with him, Job* 25. 2. *He rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives them to whom he will: he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another*, Pſal. 75. 7. His is the *kingdom, power, glory, victory, majeſty, greatneſs. He is exalted as head above all, and reigns over all. I will cauſe*, ſays he, *the kingdom of Iſrael to ceaſe*, Hoſ. 1. 4. And *at what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it*, &c. *Jer.* 18. 7. 3. *He treadeth down the higheſt perſons of the earth, He comes upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay: he bringeth princes to nothing, he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity*, Iſa. 40. 23. *He cuts off the ſpirit of Princes, he is terrible to the Kings of the earth*, Pſal. 76. 12. *Thou haſt trodden down all them that err from thy ſtatutes, Pſal.* 119. 118, 119, though never ſo mighty. And therefore be men never ſo great, or high, this cannot ſecure them, nor ſet them out of his reach, who treads upon, and treads down the higheſt places, powers, and perſons of the earth. And thoſe *that walk in pride, he is able to abaſe*, as *Nebuchadnezzar* acknowledged, *Dan.* 4. 37, Yea, *And in the thing wherein they deal proudly, to be above them*, Exod. 18. 11. *The loftineſs of men he boweth down, and the haughtineſs of men he makes low*: He tells *Edom*, Obad. 3. 4, *The pride of his heart had deceived him, that dwelt in the clefts of the rock, and whoſe habitation was high, that ſaid in his heart, who ſhall bring me down to the ground?* But ſays God,

Conterens ſuperbos. Grotius.

God. *Though thou exalt thy ſelf as the Eagle, and though thou ſet thy neſt among the ſtars, yet thence will I bring thee down.* And it is ſaid of the wicked, *Though his exeellency mount up to the Heavens, and his head reaeh unto the clouds; yet he ſhall periſh for ever, like his own dung,* &c. *Job* 20. 67. And thus he treadeth down the heights of the earth, *and is moſt high for evermore, Pſal.* 92. 8. There are high, and higher then they; but God is higheſt of all, higher than the higheſt, *Eccleſ.* 5. 8. than the Heavens, yea, the higheſt Angels in Heaven. And hence he is ſaid, *Pſal.* 113. 4, 5, 6, *to humble himſelf, to behold even the things that are in Heaven.*

6. *He that does all this, the Lord, the God of hoſts is his name.* 1. *The Lord Jehovah,* which denotes, 1. His Self-exiſtency, that he hath his Being of, and from himſelf, and gives being to all his creatures. And 2. His eternity, that he is everlaſting.

2. *The God of Hoſts*: All the creatures in Heaven and Earth, being (as it were) his Hoſts, under his power, and at his beck and command, as Soldiers under their General, to order, diſpoſe, and imploy, as he pleaſes: And he has his Hoſts above, and beneath, *Cœleſtial,* and *Terreſtrial*: And being ſuch a God as before he is deſcribed, He that *formeth the mountains,* &c. A God of ſuch infinite power, he can muſter them up when, and as he pleaſes, and make them do what execution he will. And this is a Title often in Scripture given to God: we have it thrice in one Verſe, *Zach.* 1. 3, *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, turn ye unto me ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and I will turn unto*

to you, ſaith the Lord of hoſts: which ſhews there is much in this, to move us to turn to him: For he being *The Lord, the God of hoſts*; if we do ſo indeed, he is every way able to ſave us, and do us good: but if we do not, to puniſh and deſtroy us. *The Lord, the God of hoſts is his name.*

And ſhall not all this now prevail with us, to prepare to meet this God, who doth all this, *who formeth the mountains, createth the wind,* &c. and whoſe name is, *The Lord, the God of hoſts?* For if we do indeed meet him, what cannot ſo great a God do for us? Surely he can diſperſe and drive away all imminent evils from us, and communicate all good unto us; but if we refuſe to meet him, what cannot he do againſt us? and what evils cannot he bring upon us? *He that formeth the mountains,* &c. And therefore if his mercy cannot move us, let yet, as I ſaid, his Majeſty; if not his Goodneſs, his Greatneſs; and ſeeing all that is here ſaid, fully declares, that there's no oppoſing nor reſiſting him by force, our only way then is ſo to meet him, as to appeaſe him; For *with God is terrible majeſty,* Job 37. 22. *Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance; yea, all nations before him are as nothing, and counted to him leſs than nothing and vanity,* Iſa. 40. 15, 17. *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his preſence; yea, the world and all that dwell therein,* Nahum. 1. 5. *And who would ſet the briars and thorns againſt me in battel, I would go thorow them, and burn them together,* Iſa. 27. 4. The moſt ſteely and flinty ſpirits in the World,

World, can no more ſtand before God, than Briars and Thorns before a conſuming Fire. How eaſily does he break in pieces all oppoſite power? *By ſtrength ſhall no man prevail*, 1 *Sam.* 2. 9. Where's the Man that ever was able to carry it againſt him? or, hath got any thing by contending with him, but blows, and utter overthrow? *Pharoah* contended with God, but what got he? So *Julian* the Apoſtate, but was he not forc'd at laſt, throwing up his blood towards Heaven, to cry out, *Viciſti Galilee*, Thou haſt overcome, *O thou Galilean*. Others, even the mightieſt, have one time or other met with their match; but never did God. Before him the mightieſt Giants are but as Pigmies and Potſherds, and let the *Potſherds ſtrive with the potſherds of the earth*, but not with the great God. Shall weakneſs contend with ſtrength? Impotency with Omnipotency? It is ſaid of a creature, *Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battel; do no more*. And, *None is ſo fierce that dare ſtir him up: Who then is able to ſtand before me?* Job 41. 8, 10. You know what they ſaid, 2 *Kings* 10. 4, *Two Kings ſtood not before him, how then ſhall we ſtand?* Why, a whole World could not ſtand before God. *He is wiſe in heart, and mighty in ſtrength, who hath hardned himſelf againſt him, and hath proſpered, Job* 9. 4. And therefore there being no withſtanding him by power, nor carrying it againſt him by force, let this prevail with us ſo to meet him, as to labour by all poſſible ways and means to pacifie him: And then that power which cannot be withſtood by us, will be imployed for us; both for averting all imminent evils, and for procuring all deſirable good.

Mot.

Mot. 3. *The great God when he is in ſuch a way, ſeeks for ſuch that ſhould ſo meet him,* as to appeaſe him, that ſhould *make up the hedg, and ſtand in the gap before him for the land, that he ſhould not deſtroy it:* Which as it ſhews the great ſcarcity of ſuch, that they are but few: For elſe, what need they be ſought? So his great ſolicitouſneſs for ſuch, and their great acceptableneſs to him, and how unwilling he is to go on to execute what he threatens, and that he had rather by ſuch be prevented. Now that the Lord ſeeks for ſuch, ſee *Ezek.* 22. 30, *And I ſought for a man among them, that ſhould make up the hedg, and ſtand in the gap before me, for the land,* &c. Peoples ſins do as it were break down the hedg, make breaches, open gaps for judgments to come in at: They unfortifie Cities, unarm States, unhedg Churches, and render them as it were naked: as *Exod.* 32. 25, It is there ſaid, that when that people had ſinned, *Moſes ſaw that they were naked, i. e.* they lay open to Gods judgments; and the greater a peoples ſins are, the more they break down the hedg, and the greater and wider gaps and breaches do they make. And now, ſays the Lord, *I ſought for a man among them that ſhould make up the hedg, and ſtand in the gap before me, for the land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it.* God had bid others ſearch and ſee, *Jer.* 5. 1, *Run ye to and fro thorow the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, and ſee now and know, and ſeek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man.* Why were men ſo ſcarce in *Jeruſalem* at that time? And was there ſuch a dearth of them, that a man could not be found? Surely no, *Jeruſalem* had men enough, ſuch as they were.

It

It had throngs of men in every Street, but the meaning is, a Man ſo and ſo qualified; *if there be any that executeth judgment, that ſeeketh the truth*, and ſo ſhould ſtand in the gap; but they could find none: But this did not ſatisfie God, they might be careleſs in this work, or overlook ſuch a one; and therefore he here ſeeks himſelf. *And I ſought for a man*, &c. And how deſirous is God then of ſuch? And ſhall he not find ſuch, ſhall he ſeek in vain? God forbid, how ſad would that be?

Mot. 4. If we do not thus meet God, but ſtill go on by our ſins more and more to provoke him; God will meet us; but how dreadfully, and in a terrible manner, in anger, wrath and diſpleaſure? Meet us, *but not as a man*, as he threathens, *Iſa.* 47. 3, *I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man, i. e.* after the manner of men: what is wrapt up in this expreſſion, I ſhall open in theſe Two or Three particulars, *not as a man, i. e.* 1*ſt*, In the weakneſs of a man, *man being weak in power*, but as a Powerful Almighty God, *non viribus humanis ſed Divinis*, &c. thou ſhalt find thou haſt to deal, not with a man, but a God; and ſo with one who is every way able utterly to conſume and deſtroy thee: Thou mayeſt bear up againſt men, but canſt thou bear up againſt me? Or, *can thine heart indure, or can thine hands be ſtrong in the days that I ſhall deal with thee?* &c. Ezek. 22. 14. Or 2*dly*, *Not as a man, i. e.* not with that clemency and compaſſion that men many times uſe and ſhow, but as a revengeful God; ſo that *mine eye ſhall not ſpare, neither will I have pity*;

and

and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them, Ezek. 8. 18,—9. 10. Thus not only ſhalt thou not find the mercy and kindneſs of a God, but not ſo much as that of a man; neither will I meet thee in the weakneſs of a man, nor in, or with the compaſſion of a man. Or *3dly, Not as a man, i. e.* but rather as ſome Salvage devouring Beaſt, as a Bear, Lyon, Leopard, or ſuch like Beaſt of Prey. As the Lord threatens elſewhere: *Therefore will I be unto them a as Lyon, as a Leopard by the way will I obſerve them. I will meet them as a Bear that is bereaved of her whelps: I will rent the Caul of their hearts, and there will I devour them like a Lyon: the wild beaſts ſhall tear them*, Hoſea 13. 7, 8. Thus will the Lord meet, and thus will he deal with all proud, refractory, ſtout-hearted ſinners, that turn not to him, but go on ſtill by their ſins more and more to provoke him. *He will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy ſcalp of ſuch a one as goes on ſtill in his treſpaſſes. The Lord ſhall ſwallow them up in his wrath, and the fire ſhall devour them*, Pſal. 68. 21—21. 9.

And when the Lord doth this, 1. There will be *no eſcaping of his hand*, no ſecuring of themſelves from his wrath, neither by power, nor policy; by force, nor flight; by ſtrength, nor ſtratagems; *He that fleeth of them ſhall not flee away: and he that eſcapeth of them, ſhall not be delivered; though they dig into hell, thence ſhall my hand take them*, &c. *Amos* 9. 1, &c. The meaning is, that by no means they ſhall be able to ſecure themſelves from the wrath of God. So *Chap.* 2. 14, 15, *Therefore the flight ſhall periſh from the ſwift, and*

the ſtrong ſhall not ſtrengthen his force, neither ſhall the mighty deliver himſelf, &c. And in vain are Mountains and Rocks called upon to ſecure here. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? do not I fill heaven and earth, ſaith the Lord? Jer.* 23. 24. 2. As there will be no eſcaping his hand; ſo there will be no being delivered out of his hand; and, *There is none*, ſaith the Lord, *that can deliver out of my hand, Iſa.* 43. 13. If we fall indeed into mens hands, God can yet reſcue and deliver us, as often as he did *David, Paul*, and others: But who ſhall deliver out of Gods hand, who is greater than all? None ever did or can. And hence is it ſaid, That *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb.* 10. 31. *i. e.* as an enemy, as an avenger, into his wrathful hands. It is a bleſſed thing indeed, and that which is beſt for us, to fall into the hands of God, with reſpect to his mercy, as a correcting, chaſtiſing Father, and as looking for mercy from him, in and through a Mediatour: And thus *David* choſe to fall into the hands of God, rather than of men; but to fall into the hands of God, with reſpect to his wrath, and vengeance, as contenders with his power, and as contemners of his offers of mercy, and tenders of peace; ſo it is *a fearful thing*. For he is *the living God*, and for ever lives to execute what he threatens, and there is no being delivered out of his hand. *Fain they would indeed flee out of his hand, Job* 27. 22, extricate themſelves from thoſe miſeries which have taken hold of them; but in vain do they attempt it: They would give no dilligence at all to meet God, ſo as to appeaſe his wrath; and now they ſhall give all dilligence in

vain,

vain, either to eſcape, or flee out of his hand. *Now conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver, Pſal.* 50. 22.

Mot. 5. If we do indeed thus meet God, he will meet us comfortably, graciouſly; his meeting of us will be very ſweet and reviving; for he will meet us ſo as to be appeas'd towards us, and we ſhall *make peace with him*, as he hath ſaid, *Iſa.* 27. 5, *Or let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me:* And what then? Shall it be in vain? No, it follows, *And he ſhall make peace with me:* He ſhall find me exorable, and eaſie to be intreated: If I be treated with in ſuch a way, and in, and through ſuch a one, as I offer ſinners to be treated with: and never indeed was there a treaty with God in Chriſt for peace, in a right way, in vain: And therefore the Lord inviting us here *to prepare to meet him*, ſhews us what is good, even that which he requires of us, to prepare to meet him; ſo that while many are ſaying, Who will ſhew us any good? Here's what is good indeed, and not only our duty, but our great intereſt and concern: *David* prays, *Pſal.* 86. 17, *Shew me a token for good:* and if we were once brought to this, this would prove a token for good indeed; for good to our ſelves and to the Nation; for God who is now in the way of his Judgments, would then return to his ways of Grace and Mercy: and then we thus meeting God, he will ſo meet us, as to own us, bleſs us, accept us, and graciouſly receive us; he will meet us with loving-kindneſs and tender-mercies, with the ſhinings

of his Face, with the light of his Countenance, with his Favour and Love, in which *is life*; yea, which *is better than life*, Pſal 30. 5—63. 3. With his bleſſing, and choiceſt bleſſings; with Grace, Pardon, Peace, Reconciliation, *&c.* and then as *his going forth is prepared*, ſo ſhall it by us be experienc'd, *as the morning*, or *Sun-riſing to the world*, and he ſhall *come unto us as the rain, as the former and latter rain unto the earth:* And what a compleat bleſſing are Sun and Rain to the earth? and the ſame in his acceſſes will he be to us; and then he will meet us, as *Eſau* met *Jacob*, *Who ran to meet him, and imbrac'd him, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him*, Gen. 33. 4. As *Aaron* met *Moſes*, Who *when he ſaw him, was glad in his heart*, Exod. 4. 14. As *Joſeph* met his Brethren, when he made himſelf known to them, *Gen.* 45. As the Father met his returning *Prodigal*, who when *he was yet a great way off, ſaw him, and had compaſſion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him*, Lnke 15. 20. As *David* met *Abigail*, *Who accepted her perſon and preſents, and ſaid to her, Go up to thy houſe in peace: See I have hearkned to thy voice*, &c. 1 Sam. 25. 35. And *ver.* 33, *Bleſſed, ſays he, be thy advice, and bleſſed be thou, which haſt kept me this day from coming to ſhed blood, and from avenging my ſelf with my own hand; for in very deed, as the Lord God of Iſrael liveth, except thou hadſt haſted, and come to meet me, ſurely, there had not been left*, &c. So will God ſay to you, Who ſhall indeed thus meet him, You are *the bleſſed of the Lord, who made heaven and earth:* And bleſſed be you, and bleſſed be your work, and bleſſed be the

way

way and courſe you took to meet me in the way of my Judgments: for in very deed, unleſs you had haſted to come to meet me; unleſs you had *made up the hedg, and ſtood in the gap before me for the Land*, I had deſtroy'd it: I had *poured out my indignation upon them:* I had *conſumed them by the fire of my wrath, and their own way had I recompenſed upon their heads.*: But bleſſed be you who prevented me. And what an honour, and what a bleſſed thing is this? What ground of ſingular comfort may it afford, to be inſtrumentally the ſaviours of a Nation, and to keep it from ruin; and to have the ſalvation thereof, as inſtrumental to lie at our door, and to prevail with God for mercy, not only for our ſelves, but others, the Nation?

Mot. 6. Sixthly and laſtly, The Lord will not only ſo meet us, but remain and ſtill abide with us, and build up mercy among us for ever. Then *the hope of Iſrael, the ſaviour thereof in the time of trouble*, will not be as *a ſtranger in the land*, nor *as a way-faring man that turns aſide to tarry for a night*; but as an home-dweller, and will perform that everlaſting Covenant, *That he will not turn away from after us* to do us good; but continue to do us good *with his whole heart, and his whole ſoul*; and we ſhall be *his reſt, and his reſt ſhall be glorious, and therein*, will he ſay, *will I dwell, for I have deſired it:* And then *Glory ſhall dwell in our land, and mercy and truth ſhall meet together, righteouſneſs and peace ſhall kiſs each other*; and then this City, the City of our ſolemnities, ſhall recover its priſtine glory and grandeur, and become famous

mous and renown'd, a *City ſought out and not forſaken, Iſa.* 62. 12: and as iniquity brought it low, and was its reproach; ſo righteouſneſs ſhall again exalt it, and be its praiſe; and we ſhall then ſee our *Jeruſalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that ſhall not be taken down, nor one of the ſtakes removed, or cords broken; but there the glorious Lord will be unto us, a place of broad rivers, and ſtreams,* &c. *Iſa.* 33. 20, 21. And in that day, ſhall that ſong be ſung, *We have a ſtrong city, ſalvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks, and upon all the glory ſhall be a defence*; yea, the Lord himſelf will be its defence and *keep it, he will water it every moment, leſt any hurt it, he will keep it night and day:* And then the name of this City, yea and Kingdom too, ſhall be what God once ſaid ſhould be the name of that City, which we read of, *Ezek.* 48. 35, (As that wherein its happineſs and chief good ſhould conſiſt) *Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there*: Amen, and Amen.

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